Anita Bryant's holy war on Florida gays ☐ The saccharin flap

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BY JIM WRIGHT

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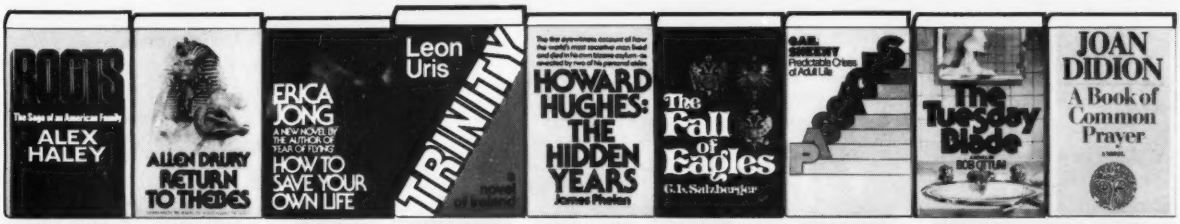

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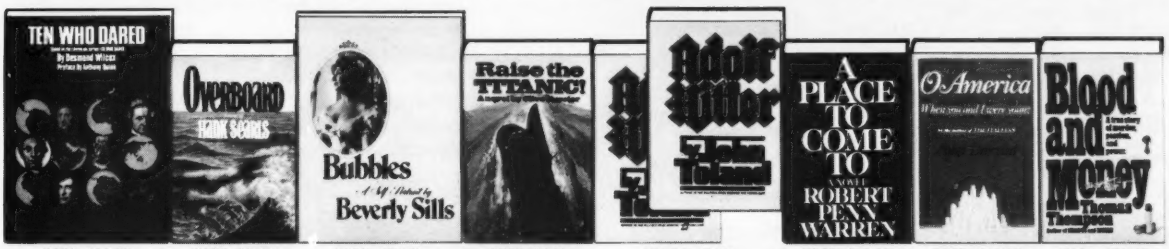

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New Times

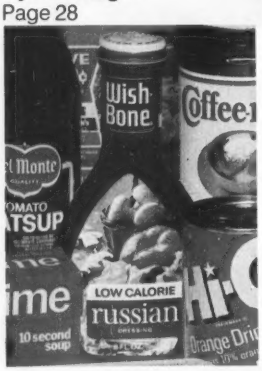
APRIL 15, 1977
VOLUME 8, NUMBER 8

The sweet taste of excess

If you're like most Americans, you're hooked on.an 85-pound-a-year sugar habit that exposes you to more risks than rotten teeth: diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, to name just a few. Even worse, detecting sugar takes the skill of a Lew Archer, since most of today's intake is "hidden" in processed foods.

By Jim Wright

Page 28



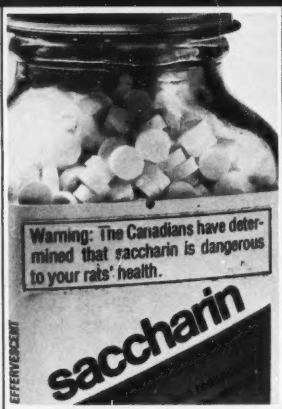
The sacking of saccharin

What was the FDA really trying to accomplish by banning saccharin? According to this theory, it was trying to put saccharin—and dozens of questionable products—back on the grocery shelf.

By Robert Shrum

Page 41

COVER
PHOTOGRAPH BY DENNY TILLMAN



Trouble in paradise

Things were calm when Miami passed its gay rights ordinance in January. But when Baptist guru Anita Bryant let loose on what she termed "the homosexual recruiters of Dade County," this sun'n'surf capital of the Bible Belt became a polarized city.

By Frank Rose

Page 44

Ron Laird: a walking disaster

He's won 70 national championships, set 81 U.S. records. But after 20 years of athletic triumphs, Ron Laird, amateur walker, is still poor, unknown, homeless—dodging the taunts of unappreciative spectators and withstanding the rejections of disinterested sponsors.

By Sam Merrill

Page 54

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Party Lines
Can Carter make a truce between detente and human rights?
By Robert Shrum
Page 4

Slow Down
Breakthrough on break-ins, FBI style.
By James S. Kunen
Page 9

Letters Page 10

The Insider Page 15

REVIEWS

Music: Peter Allen goes to Rio
Or, life is a cabaret.
By Cliff Jahr
Page 64

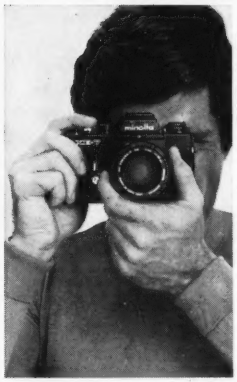
Records
In the studio with Philip Glass, in the swim with the Beach Boys.
By Jim Miller
Page 65

Movies: Mirror images
A comparison of the recent Altman and Rudolph films will show the child is certainly father to the man.
By Richard Corliss
Page 67

Books: Roof don't leak when there ain't no rain
John Jerome's *Truck* rolls along nicely.
By Geoffrey Wolff
Page 70

Final Tribute
The Earth-shoe grounding.
By Arthur Lubow
Page 72

Eleven questions to ask yourself before buying a 35mm SLR.



Knowing what to look for now in a 35mm SLR can save you money and prevent problems later on.

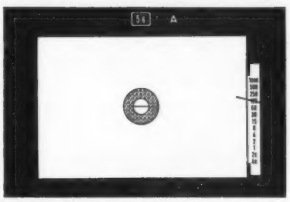
1. How much camera do I need? Most manufacturers, including Minolta, offer a tempting array of features. Like interchangeable finders and focusing screens, motorized film winding, self-timers and multiple-exposure capability. If you'll be using them, fine. If not, save yourself some money by cutting out the frills.

2. Is match-needle or electronic auto-exposure control best? Minolta offers both, so our only concern is that you get what's best for you.

Generally a match-needle camera costs less. To set exposure, you line up two needles in the viewfinder. It's easy, fast and accurate, but you do the work. Minolta SR-T match-needle cameras offer a wide variety of features and prices.

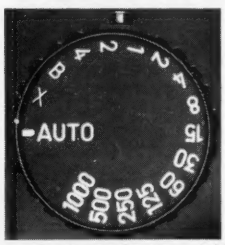
Minolta's newest 35mm SLR's have electronically controlled shutter speeds. So even if the light changes the instant before you shoot, the camera will set itself for correct exposure. Among Minolta's electronic SLR's, you'll find features like interchangeable viewfinders and screens, shutter speeds to 1/2000th of a second and multiple-exposure capability.

3. What should I look for in the viewfinder? First of all, a bright image. So you can see clearly and focus easily. Judge this by comparing several brands under the same light conditions.



Then, exposure information. The more the viewfinder shows, the more you know about how the camera is taking the picture. If this means a lot to you, pay the extra cost. If not, save on a simpler camera.

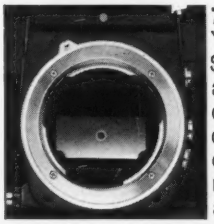
The important thing about Minolta SLR's is that in every single one, you can compose, focus, set exposure and shoot without ever looking away from the viewfinder. So you won't miss shots of even the fastest-moving subjects.



4. What range of shutter speeds do I need? Most picture taking is done at speeds between 1/60th and 1/500th of a second. But to stop very fast action, higher speeds are handy to have. And slower speeds are useful for available-light shooting and spectacular night shots. Depending on the Minolta model, you can get speeds as fast as 1/2000th of a second and as slow as 16 seconds.

5. What is a "fast" lens, and do I need one? The more light a lens lets in, the "faster" it is. Faster lenses like an f/1.2 or f/1.4 are more expensive, but nice to have if you do a lot of shooting in dim light.

6. Why is the lens system important? Interchangeable lenses let your camera grow with you. Minolta offers almost 40, from a 7.5mm "fisheye" to a 1600mm super-telephoto. Minolta makes all their own lenses to insure compatibility with Minolta cameras.



7. How fast can I change lenses? You shouldn't have to miss shots. So Minolta developed and patented a bayonet mount that lets you change lenses with less than a quarter turn. And unlike other bayonet mounts, Minolta's doesn't require you to realign f/stops afterwards.

8. How should the camera feel? Solid. Comfortable. Not too big, not too small. Your fingers should fall naturally into place on the controls. Advance the film wind lever. If it feels gritty or rough now, how will it feel after a couple of thousand shots?

9. How should it sound? Press the shutter button. Noisiness means either vibration or inadequate damping of moving parts. Or both. The newest Minolta shutters are a joy to hear because you almost can't hear them at all.

10. How do I judge craftsmanship? Compare. Everything should be tucked in neatly. Finishes should be even and unmarred. No machining marks should be visible, even inside the camera.

11. What is the camera's reputation? Be sure to ask friends about Minolta. Since it's the best-selling imported camera brand in the U.S., chances are someone you know owns one.

And if you'd like literature on Minolta 35mm SLR's, write to Minolta Corporation, 101 Williams Dr., Ramsey, N.J. 07446.

Minolta

The more you know about cameras, the more you'll want a Minolta.

Party Lines

The human rights of spring/By Robert Shrum

In springtime the high school students come to Washington on their senior trips. A senator who has spoken to several groups of them senses a prevailing mood. "There are more questions about Carter's human rights policy than anything else," he reports with some surprise. "They sound excited about it. It gives them a reason to feel good about the country."

From its start in 1974, the *Cambridge Report* of public opinion recorded a national trend of discouraged nostalgia: increasing numbers of Americans were saying that the past was better than the present and the future would be worse. Watergate is one reason. The energy crisis is another. But at the core of the pessimism is a decade of foreign policy disaster that left the moral basis for American action in tatters. For the first time, America lost a war, without even the consolation prize of a moral victory. At the United Nations, America seemed unheeded and outnumbered. The CIA became notorious for payoffs and murder plots.

UPI

Moscow maneuvers: Vance hopes Brezhnev (center) and Gromyko (right) agree that human rights and SALT talks are separate issues

In the first months of a new year and administration, the popular pessimism appears to be lifting. The initiatives on human rights have contributed heavily to the shifting mood. In the international arena, where events had gone so badly, Carter as promised has been making the country "proud for a change." "The people are proud," says a congressional leader. "They don't like the idea of having to pussyfoot around."

Carter's approach stands appealingly on the most traditional ground of American foreign policy. Beseeched in 1822 to send troops to the side of the Greek rebellion against Ottoman Turkey, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams offered the "heart, benediction and prayers" of the United States, but declined to substitute "force" for the example of "liberty." The United States, he said, could not "become the dictatress of the world" without losing "her own spirit." She would be a witness, not a global combatant. That conception suits the post-Vietnam spirit. Americans still want to claim world leadership, but not through armed intervention. Thus the President rebukes oppression, but foreswears CIA plots to overthrow the oppressors.

Yet the policy is not quite that straightforward, as administration officials themselves concede. Adams' notion is being adapted to the realities of American empire.

Since the days of Truman and Acheson, the United States has been ready to make alliances with many minor devils against the archenemy of communism. French colonialism, Franco and South American juntas were all defined within the "free world." To get and keep countries on our side, American foreign aid provided the tweezers for secret police torturers. It was, we were told, an unfortunate necessity. If the monolithic conspiracy was not contained everywhere, the dominoes would inevitably fall on San Francisco.

So in one sense the loss in Vietnam has been liberating. Thieu's defeat proved to be a local event, not a geopolitical catastrophe. The new administration has been busy discarding the remnants of the old absolutism. Carter has moved quickly to normalize relations with Vietnam and Cuba.

This realistic, case-by-case approach underlies the human rights policy. It no longer seems imperative to cling to every potential ally, to understand and underwrite Argentina and Uruguay no matter what they inflict on their own citizens. But there are dispensations for several cold war relics, notably South Korea, where opposition leaders are in jail, proposals for constitutional amendments are punishable by a 15-year prison term, and students cutting classes have faced the death penalty. (Yes, the death penalty—for playing hookey.) The Carter Administration has resisted any aid cutoff there; Secretary of State Vance recently insisted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that support for Korea was essential to reassure Japan.

"We have to decide on a case-by-case basis," says a high State Department official. "We're not Marxists applying *a priori* absolutes." He adds: "The question is not just security. For example, there's a tendency to define human rights too narrowly. They are economic and social, as well as political. We shouldn't condone torture. But we shouldn't starve people to punish their governments for torturing them. We have to balance each situation carefully."

Nowhere is the balance as fragile as in relations with the Soviet Union. The human rights pressure on Moscow has attracted more attention than any other application of the policy. But despite the ballyhoo, the President has not offered, and the press not asked for, a bottom line: what actual results does Carter expect from writing to Sakharov and meeting with Bukovsky? Two days before Cyrus Vance went to Moscow, a few senators on the Foreign Relations Committee intended to ask him that question during a briefing session, but time ran out. One senator now says: "I'm not exactly sure what the people in the administration think they're doing."

With anticommunist countries such as Argentina, Carter's obvious aim is to encourage a relaxation of the

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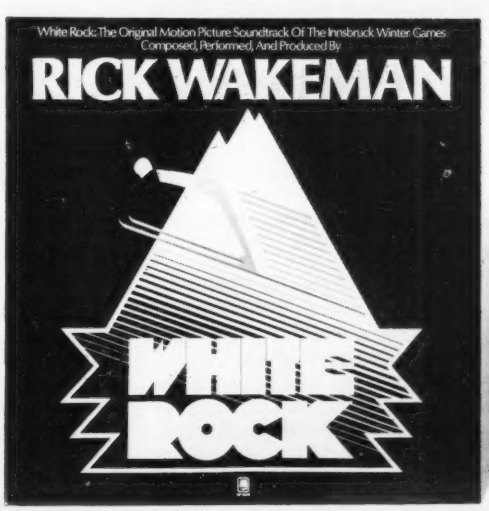
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repression, or at least to end American complicity in it. But a State Department source explains that the Soviet case is different: "We don't expect the Russians to change their society." The Soviet dictatorship has an iron history of spurning civil liberties. Nikolai Bukharin, a leader of the October Revolution who was hailed by Lenin as "the favorite of the party," subsequently committed the "crime" of suggesting a measure of tolerance for "semi-friends and semi-enemies" among the Russian people. Bukharin kept his dissent within party councils. In 1937, in a Central Committee session, he denounced Stalin's "terrorisms and torture on a scale hitherto unheard of." The committee's reaction came down to three words: "Arrest. Try. Shoot." (Bukharin's 1938 show trial became the model for Arthur Koestler's novel, *Darkness at Noon*.)

Not only Bukharin, but 70 percent of the Central Committee that condemned him ultimately perished in the purges. The revolution consumed its own creators. A quarter of all the Communist party members in Russia were executed in the 1930s. Though less extreme, current Soviet leaders have an outlook "shaped by the experience of the Stalin years," in the words of Columbia scholar Stephen Cohen. They were not raised in a tradition of human rights.

Outside pressures merely stiffen Soviet attitudes. Premier Alexei Kosygin told a visiting American businessman that in 1974, ambassadors from the Kremlin's Arab allies demanded that the Soviets honor the boycott against Israel by withdrawing their accounts from Jewish banks. The next day Kosygin gave his answer: the Soviet Union was doubling its deposits in the Rothschild banks.

In one recent instance, external pressure did result, temporarily, in a Soviet concession. After the passage of the Jackson Amendment, linking trade and Jewish emigration, foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, while formally denying it, informally agreed that 45,000 to 60,000 Jews could leave each year. But this concession would not have changed the Soviet society that the Jews left. (The agreement collapsed after Congress limited the Russian line of credit from the Export-Import Bank.) In any event, the Carter Administration has renounced the Jackson tactic; repeatedly and vigorously, the White House and the State Department have separated human rights from other issues.

Now the critical question seems to be whether the Soviet Union will attempt its own relinkage. A State Department expert argues that the Russians regard human rights and arms control as separable issues. "They will sign a treaty that's in their interest," he says. But he also cautions that the separability will hold only as long as the Kremlin does not suspect that defending dissidents is a device to weaken the Soviet regime. He characterizes as "loose talk" U.N. Ambassador Young's recent statement that support for the dissidents will foment a mass uprising within 10 years. But National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski has sent a similar signal by pushing William Griffith—who masterminded the Radio Free Europe broadcasts urging the satellites to rebel during the 1950s—for a seat on the Board for International Broadcasting, which now directs Radio Free Europe. When Senators George McGovern and Charles Percy wrote the President a letter opposing Griffith, Brzezinski responded privately: "That's the best recommendation he has." One foreign policy official thinks that Brzezinski may be "looking forward to the day of the uprising," but doubts that his attitude indicates Carter's purposes: "Vance really is the Secretary of State. Brzezinski is not another Kissinger. He's a high-level staffer who staples the papers together in the proper order."

After stirring the anti-Russian coals of American opinion, Carter may find putting out the fire nearly impossible

What if the Russians feel threatened by the human rights offensive? In the 1968 Czechoslovakian crisis, the Soviets demonstrated their readiness to sacrifice arms negotiations in order to stifle even marginal civil freedom within a one-party Communist state. The tanks rolled into Prague, and the first scheduled SALT talks—on the antiballistic missile—were canceled. Georgi Arbatov of the Soviet Institute of American Studies reiterated the warning this March: if Carter pursues a "messianic approach," the outcome will be "war and conflict."

The SALT cancellation was not the only side effect of the Czechoslovakian episode. The Soviet Union took a beating in world opinion; inflicting such damage, a source reports, is one of Carter's current aims. Hoping to put Moscow on the defensive in international politics, the President has openly described the human rights campaign as a phase of the continuing ideological struggle between democracy and communism. The difficulty with this plan, says one Senate African expert, is that "most of the world doesn't care that much about democracy—the frontline nations [surrounding Rhodesia]care that the Russians are backing the guerrillas."

But in fact the real bottom line of the human rights offensive is none of the above. The primary target is actually American opinion, not the Russian system. The policy that seems to hinder a SALT agreement may subtly expedite one. By this reasoning, Carter is occupying Henry Jackson's conservative ground to establish his own anti-Communist credentials and blunt congressional opposition to arms control. "That's part of it," according to one administration official. Another adds: "The President can't afford to send a treaty to the Senate if he has the image of being soft on the Soviets." And while Carter dominates American headlines by defending Russian dissidents, this reasoning continues, Brezhnev can pound the podium in public outrage to appease the Politburo reactionaries. Meanwhile, the two sides can continue the real business of arms reduction. "If Carter has calculated that," a Foreign Relations Committee analyst comments, "it's brilliant."

At the very least, Carter has established a domestic base of credibility for his Russian policy. "Human rights has been good for him politically," an aide says. "The polls on it look great." The danger is that the administration's calculation of the Soviet response will turn out wrong. If the Kremlin reacts against further arms control or retaliates by pressuring back in Africa or the Middle East, the President will find it hard to climb out of his pulpit. He has talked himself into a rhetorical corner. After stirring the anti-Russian coals of American opinion, barely cooled off from the cold war, he may find putting out the fire nearly impossible. Carter might feel compelled to stay the course as Lyndon Johnson did in Vietnam. The human rights policy of this spring could provoke and perpetuate a long cold winter in Soviet-American relations.

There are Democrats in Congress who worry about the possibility, but they do so alone or anonymously, as the doubters did in the early days of Vietnam. Carter is the leader of their party. As for the Republicans, the President is standing on a plank of their own platform; they can hardly blame him for talking tough to the Russians. "Things like this are seldom neat," says one member of the administration, "and Carter is very complicated." He is toeing a zigzag hardline to detente. It's a delicate balancing act.●

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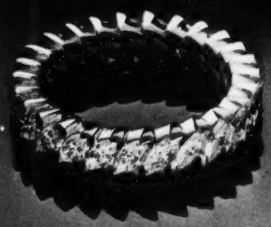

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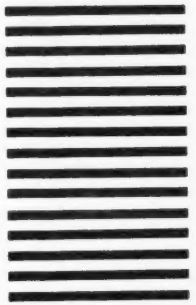

Slow Down

FBI story/By James S. Kunen

When Denver FBI agent Boyd Adsit sent Washington headquarters an "Extremist or Security Informant Progress/Justification Letter" requesting a pay raise for Timothy Redfearn, the informer he'd placed in the local Young Socialist Alliance in 1972, he checked the boxes marked "Yes" beside "Considered stable and reliable" and "Indoctrinated against disclosure." He shouldn't have.

True, the Denver University graduate student conscientiously filed hundreds of detailed reports on the members of the YSA and the allied Socialist Workers Party. Everything they said, everything they did, including their sexual habits, of course, wound up in the FBI's files. And Redfearn was nothing if not dedicated to his work. What he couldn't carry out in his memory, he stole. Twice in 1973 he burglarized the Socialist Workers Party and delivered sheaves of documents to his "control agent," Adsit. The trouble is, Redfearn just didn't know when to stop stealing.

In the small hours of the morning of July 7, 1976, he once more burglarized the SWP office, removing two-and-a-half file drawers full of material. The SWP, noting that only the files had been stolen, while valuable equipment was untouched, called a press conference, charging that the break-in had been carried out for political purposes. The Denver FBI, employing self-revelatory syntax, cabled FBI headquarters in Washington: "The SWP listed the FBI, the Nazi Party and several other right-wing organizations as suspects." The cable continued, "Newspaper inquires will receive reply that this office knows nothing of the burglary at SWP headquarters." Washington instructed Denver to tell Redfearn to return the files.

It was no good. A few days later Redfearn was arrested for one of his frequent free-lance, strictly-for-profit burglaries. He told the cops he worked for the FBI. The FBI admitted that, but denied ever having knowingly received stolen files from Redfearn.

Agent Adsit was dragged before the grand jury that investigated the affair.

The district attorney asked Adsit, "The first line of that letter [from Redfearn] of June 20, 1973, says: 'Enclosed are items stolen from the YSA local office'. . . . Were you surprised to see the word 'stolen'?" "No, I was not," Adsit replied. "Why were you not surprised?" "Because I don't believe that Mr. Redfearn truly meant 'stolen.'" "What did he mean?" the D.A. asked. "He meant that he had access to these documents. He borrowed them, and, as he says in his second sentence, that he's returning them."

A grand juror then questioned Mr. Adsit more closely on this point.

GRAND JUROR: Mr. Adsit, if I were to invite you to my home for dinner, and if behind my back you slipped a fork of mine into your pocket, and if I didn't notice the fact that a fork was missing, would that fork have been stolen by you?

ADSIT: I'm not prepared to say that I would use the word 'stolen.' I was

an invitee into your home. You took me as I was.

GRAND JUROR: So if I invite people to my home and if when they leave, without my knowledge, they carry away some of my property, then we would not, using your terminology, use the word 'stolen' to refer to that act, is that right?

ADSIT: I would have to know all the facts in the situation.

GRAND JUROR: All right. Suppose in my case, let me go one more step, suppose in my case you did know it was not my policy to allow people to remove silverware from my home without my knowledge and approval. Under those circumstances would a piece of silverware have been stolen?

ADSIT: That possibility would exist.

While this sounds a lot like a guilty man trying to wriggle off the hook, it is in fact probably a sincere presentation of the moral sensibility of an FBI man. Remember, it was the FBI that tried to drive Martin Luther King to suicide with blackmail letters. It was the FBI that attempted to destroy civil rights groups in St. Louis by sending anonymous letters to the spouses of members, accusing them of marital infidelity. It was the FBI that incited violence between black nationalist groups and reported proudly to the director, "Shootings, beatings, and a high degree of unrest continue to prevail in the ghetto area southeast of San Diego. Although no specific counterintelligence action can be credited with contributing to this overall situation, it is felt that a substantial amount of the unrest is directly attributable to this program."

Yet FBI agent Theodore Rosack, with a straight face, one assumes, told the grand jury that "it is our responsibility and our jurisdiction to investigate . . . [an] organization which does not have the best interests of this country at heart." The moral arbiters at the FBI determined that the Socialist Workers, a legitimate American electoral party that has no history of any violence or illegality, is such an organization.

No FBI man was indicted for his role in the break-ins.

Redfearn is serving up to ten years in prison. However, the judge who presided at his trial has said that he will consider reducing Redfearn's sentence, in light of the FBI activities that have been revealed in the discovery phase of a civil suit by the SWP against the government now going on in federal court in New York. The SWP is seeking $37 million in damages and a permanent injunction against further harassment. The 1,600 pages of files it has thus far obtained show, among other things, that the FBI burglarized SWP headquarters in New York at least 94 times between 1960 and 1966—an average of once every three weeks.

The civil suit is making so many of the FBI's illegal acts public that, Agent Rosack told the grand jury, "They're in effect going a long way toward destroying the FBI and law enforcement effectivenesss to investigate such groups."

Amen. ●

Letters

Hijinks on the Hill

As usual, Robert Shrum, in "Our Imperial Congress" (March 18), has pulled off another "inside" feature story. Capitol Hill hijinks have often been mentioned, but never really itemized before. The largesse amassed on the Hill is now beyond reasonable bounds. Besides, they don't deserve such royal treatment.

Lynn Myers
Lambertville, New Jersey

After reading "Our Imperial Congress" I didn't know whether to be frightened, angry, or both. Frightened that we have this condition in our government and angry that we, the people, continue to allow them to get away with it. There can be no national pride in a country that permits its elected representatives to sit in their offices in Washington and laugh and brag about how they rip off the jerks who elected them to office.

Dudley Jose
Leavittsburg, Ohio

We were quite dismayed to read the unsubstantiated allegations about Inglenook Vineyards in your article, "Our Imperial Congress."

The article stated that the House dining room purchases wine "wholesale from Inglenook." In fact, Inglenook, in compliance with Federal and the District of Columbia laws, sells directly to a distributor, who sells at the same price to all authorized D.C. buyers.

The article implies that Inglenook seeks special favors from members of Congress. Be assured that no employee of Inglenook has sought special favors or treatment from any congressman. In no way does Inglenook seek or receive special consideration.

Robert M. Furek
Vice President of Marketing
Inglenook Vineyards
San Francisco, California

Editor's Note: We regret the error.

Congress should be forced to obey the same laws it makes and forces us to obey. The members should also be held accountable for every penny they earn and spend, just as we the public are at income-tax time. Needless to say, their budget should be cut considerably.

Barbara Lawrence
Gulfport, Mississippi

Robert Shrum's feature, "Our Imperial Congress," totally misrepresents my position on fair employment.

I vigorously support fair employment practices, and made my position public last year by signing the House Fair Employment Practices Agreement. Mr. Shrum clearly and accurately described my strong and deep-seated belief in the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, but failed to fully investigate my continued endorsement of fair employment and hiring practices for all.

James C. Corman
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Editor's Note: The Fair Employment Agreement was first circulated on June 30, 1976. Mr. Corman did not sign, even after an August letter from various public interest groups urging all congressmen to do so. On October 18, 1976, the Capitol Hill's Women Political Caucus began a grassroots campaign to obtain more signatures. Mr. Corman again refused. He finally signed on December 12, 1976.

Rebirth or Redeath?

After going through the Rebirthing process ("New Hope for the Dead," March 18), I have a few words for all you sarcastic, cynical writers and disbelieving readers: Goo Goo Ga Ga.

L.C. Marincovich
Boulder, Colorado

Your readers should be told that Rebirthing is potentially extremely dangerous. Early Primal pains, including those of birth, are capable of profoundly stressing an individual, and thus should not occur "out of the blue."

During birth Primals we have recorded the physiological vital signs, and we commonly see: pulse rates up to 180–200 beats per minute, blood pressure elevations in the hypertensive range like 180/110, temperature elevations of 2–4 degrees fahrenheit, and marked increases in EEG voltage. At the end of a completed birth Primal all the vital signs return to below-baseline values. At the end of an incomplete Primal, they remain elevated and mental fragmentation may occur.

E. Michael Holden, M.D.
Medical Director, The Primal Institute
Santa Monica, California

Repelled

I was astonished to read in Lucian Truscott's article, "Requiem for a Winner," that on the night of January 2, while talking on the telephone with Rupert Murdoch and Robert Towbin, I was "sobbing," "crying," moaning about "my Clay" and otherwise ululating and carrying on. Poor Mr. Murdoch was plainly discomfited by the fact that I was being "very, very emotional," as he put it, while Mr. Towbin was quoted as offering a theory of the case: "The only thing I could conclude is that the woman was in love with Felker. There's really no other way to explain it."

There is another way to explain it. It is that none of these turgid events occurred at all—*none of them*, and nothing that could even have been mistaken for such melodrama went on in those two rather matter-of-fact, straightforward phone conversations. The emotion, the tears and the "my Clay" stuff was pure invention. My witness in this is Meg Greenfield, deputy editor of the editorial page of the *Post* and columnist for *Newsweek*, who was in the room with me during both these conversations and was as astonished as I by the version appearing in *New Times*.

And also, I might add, as repelled. It is the ultimate putdown, is it not, to attribute this kind of high-strung emotionalism to a female competitor in business or politics, and the ultimate arrogance to believe that such lies will automatically be accepted as the truth, if they are told about a woman.

Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Towbin have both denied the quotes to me and Mr. Towbin, at least, has written you a denial too.

Katharine Graham
Washington, D.C.

I, of course, have read the article in today's *New Times* and I must tell you that Mr. Truscott made up the quote attributed to me on page 36. I never said that about Mrs. Graham, and my comments about my phone conversations with her had to do with the potential sale of my stock, and nothing else. I am very upset for Mrs. Graham, more than for myself, and feel that an apology is due her.

A. Robert Towbin
New York City

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Hello, Abbie.

We went underground to interview Abbie Hoffman...and the FBI is still trying to figure it out. We named "the ten dumbest Congressmen," along with the King of Dumb.

We told the story of gay parents who are fighting for their kids...of single grandparents who have to live in sin to make ends meet...of marijuana's medical benefits. We discovered est and its leader...showed there were probably several Oswalds ...blew the whistle on the CIA's campus recruitment of spies.

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New Times

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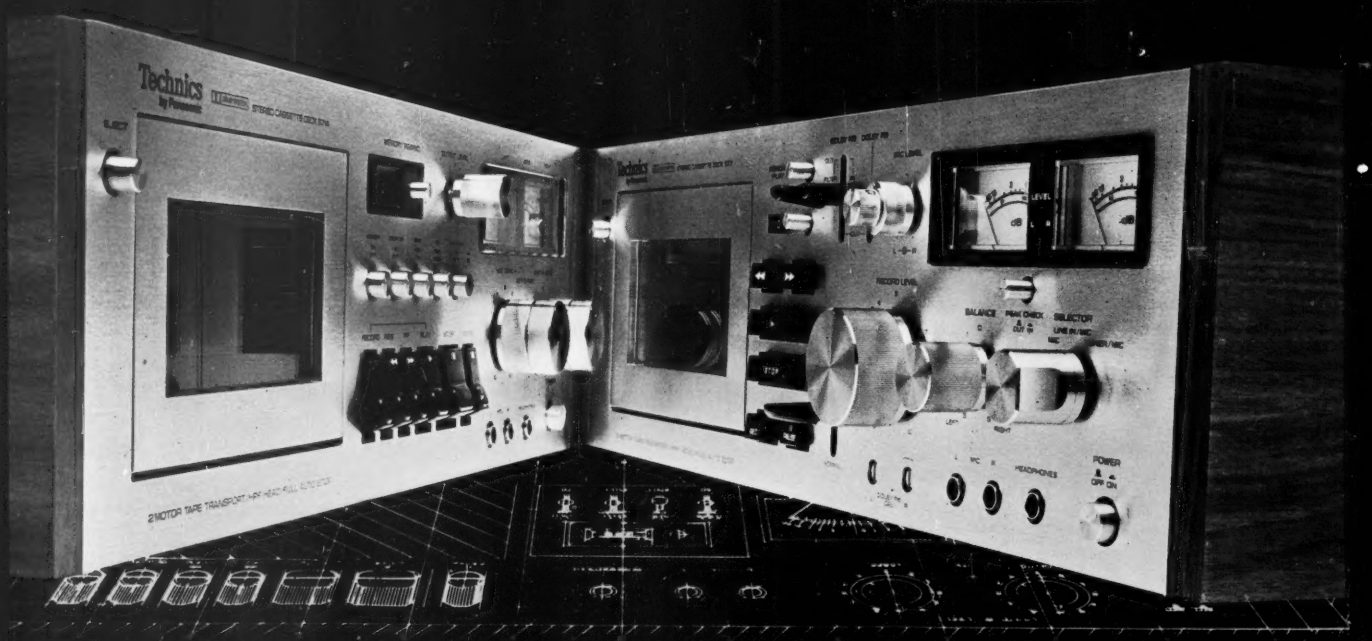

The Insider

Unsheathing Caddell's *Cambridge Report*/The real (really!) Polanski story

Politics

Baba and Barry

Barbara Walters, the newscaster, has been repeating to friends a social conversation she had once with Barry Goldwater, senator

WIDE WORLD

"Hell, yes," Barbara Walters quoted Goldwater, he'd taken money

and, according to published reports he hotly denies, one-time friend of certain mobsters. The conversation, reports say, went something like this:

Walters asked Goldwater, "Did *you* ever take money from those guys?" Replied the man who now claims he'd never heard of Meyer Lansky, "Hell, yes, everybody did in those days."

Fire sale

Throughout the campaign, Jimmy Carter promised he would sweat waste off the military budget to the tune of millions, billions. The President's first proposed military budget is nevertheless the biggest in history, and once more it's the fat boy of federal allocations.

One massive excess came in the process of training foreigners to be soldiers the American way. In 1975 alone, the General Accounting Office reports we spent $20 million offering military training courses to foreign countries—the Army undercharging other governments by $18.7 million, the Navy by the rest. The Air Force, not even included in the GAO's audit, undercharged for training pilots by $11.7 million at *one* installation alone. Since October 1976, we've cut back another 20–30 percent in our charges to imported trainees.

Despite the fire-sale rates, the Defense Department still hardly collects on its due. The Army, Navy and Air Force took almost a year trying to collect on their huge tuition bills. All in all, it looks like Lee Strasberg earns more teaching acting than the United States government does teaching fighting.

Truce in advertising

In the small southern town, the two brothers were thought to be something of a pair of paradigms: younger brother Billy, the hell-raising redneck whose adventures embarrassed the respectable folks; his older brother Jimmy, the businessman, aggressive, ambitious and sober. Whatever one did, the other seemed always to undo.

Billy and Jimmy Flowers live in Smithfield, North Carolina. Ten years ago Billy, the vice-president of the United Klans of North Carolina, erected a large billboard that said "KKKK Welcomes You to Smithfield. Join & Support United Klans of America Inc. Help Fight Communism & Intergration." Floodlit and towering like a space monster on its 50-foot poles, it chilled tourists driving from New York to Florida on Interstate 95, which skirts the edge of Smithfield in eastern North Carolina.

For ten years the citizens of Smithfield stewed, and no citizens stewed more than the Lassiter clan which, through its extensions, controls the town's liberal weekly newspaper and health food store. The sign plagued them. "We gritted our teeth and got mad at it," says Wingate Lassiter, a reporter on the paper. Smithfield *Herald* editor Thomas Lassiter, the white-haired patriarch whose father first battled the Klan in his paper 50 years ago, hated the sign more passionately than anyone in the area. But the Lassiters had learned to submerge their feelings. "We'd gotten so used to it," says Wingate, "we had just stopped thinking about it."

Jimmy Flowers didn't stop thinking about it though. When he severed his business relationship with Billy, Jimmy got the land along U.S. 70 on which the sign is located and announced plans to build an office of his Master Real Estate Co. right there.

Asked by the Smithfield zoning commission whether constructing the office meant that the sign would come down, Jimmy said it would—until the newspapers across the state picked up the story and liberally congratulated him. Then big brother began to waffle.

"I don't want to take a dozer and tear down something and get sued for it," Jimmy pleaded. "I'm sure it belongs to the Klan. I don't know what I'm going to do about it. I'm going to contact my lawyer. I'm just a country real estate agent and I don't know about owner's rights."

But Billy Flowers came around to his brother's side on the grounds of freedom of initiative. "We're going to take it down," he announced. "But

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE MURRAY

Dismantling the Smithfield, N.C., landmark that charmed thousands. Check spelling (inset) of dual threats to civilization

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we're not going to be forced to do anything. We're not going to be pushed up against the wall. . . . It has served its purpose—to inform the public what the Klan stands for."

Amazingly, there was no dancing in liberaldom. The NAACP was delighted, but Thomas Lassiter, feeling the slick-smarmy encroachment of the New South, began to question whether the proposed zoning change that would permit construction of Jimmy Flowers' real estate office was too high a price to pay for removing the evil landmark.

Deliberations about the desirability of the sign became academic on Saturday morning, March 26, when 20 hard-hatted local Klan members assembled on the site to saw the three support poles and lower the billboard. Several reporters, informed in advance by a Klan official, attempted to cover the historic event, but ran into some Old South complications. The reporters were ordered off Flowers' land and the photographers told that "your cameras won't be worth two cents" if they decided to use them.

The reporters didn't leave and the Klan members started pelting the press with rocks. Two white-helmeted knights dashed to their pick-ups and grabbed shotguns from the racks in the back. The reporters retreated to a telephone to call the North Carolina highway patrol for reinforcements. When asked by the officers what they were doing armed on such a fine, quiet spring morning, one of the old boys responded: "I was just checking it to see if it would take these shells." With the benign smile of the New South he explained, "It hasn't been working right lately." The standing objection to "Communism and Intergration" had been taken down, surrendered by old soldiers to the New South by late afternoon. —*Mark Pinsky*

Looting the Caddell coffers

Patrick Caddell, President Carter's White House pollster, offers his *Cambridge Report* poll and analysis to any subscriber who wants to pay for it. His subscription rate, however, runs higher than *Boys' Life* or even *National Geographic*. You can buy a year's worth of the *Cambridge Report* for $20,000 and no box tops.

The word is out though that the *Report*'s circulation hasn't exactly been, in mass-market terms, booming. Last week, it barely topped 20. We thought we could perform a nice service for Mr. Caddell if we gave his thousands of potential subscribers a

sample of some of the keen things they missed by skipping just one issue of the *Cambridge Report*. While waiting in a Washington dentist's office we found the *Cambridge Report* dated from the fourth quarter of 1976. Having to choose only between *Oral Hygiene Today* and the poll that reaches the President of the United States, we chose the latter. Here's some of what it held:

The *Report* gave a clue behind the President's decision to give a $50 rebate to taxpayers. The administration has felt strongly that a fortification of investment funds is necessary for an economic stabilization. According to Caddell's polling, 62 percent of Americans say they will increase their savings if "during the next 12 months your personal economic situation gets better . . . and you have extra money available." The Carter hunch is that many of the rebates will go back into the banks.

Just to show that Carter isn't blindly following the Cambridge sampling (in which he received a December positive approval rating of 62 percent, up from October's 58 percent), the *Report* showed numbers that directly contradicted Carter policies: 51 percent of Americans, it said, favored strict controls on wages and prices and 39 percent opposed them.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOBBY LONDON

2 percent of Americans think that their Congress is "excellent"; 7 percent have "a lot of confidence" in politicians

The President has kept his image distinct from that of the Democratic Congress, even to the point of driving them to chide him. He hasn't tried to make it appear that even his own party is exactly on his wavelength, and it may have been because he needs no advisers to explain the meaning of the *Report*'s disclosure of the way Americans feel about Congress. Two percent of the nation felt that the Congress is "excellent." Only 16 percent said that Congress is "good"; 50 percent believed that it's "fair" and 25 percent said "poor."

Caddell gave Carter other good news. The President has to work hard, but doesn't have to lose sleep if his performance isn't superhuman. According to the *Report*, the amount of American alienation may help out the new President. "It lowers peoples' expectations of what he can accomplish." Carter may have an easier time quelling public dissatisfaction—the majority of Americans (56 percent) "don't think a president can deliver on his promises anyway."

The poll helps to explain why Carter continues to try and sustain his antigovernment campaign image. Rating the public influences they feel best about, Americans rated politicans lowest. Seven percent said they have "a lot of confidence" in politicians. Eleven percent said they have "a lot of confidence" in the federal government. Third to the bottom in the dark depths of public opinion were the oil companies—13 percent had "a lot of confidence" in them.

The oil companies, though, had cause for happiness in the *Report*. If

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Hear Return to Forever at work—on a brand-new album. It's called "Musicmagic," and it's magic, all right. It could be Return to Forever's biggest album ever—and you don't have to be clairvoyant to know that.

"Musicmagic." Return to Forever's newest sorcery on Columbia Records and Tapes.

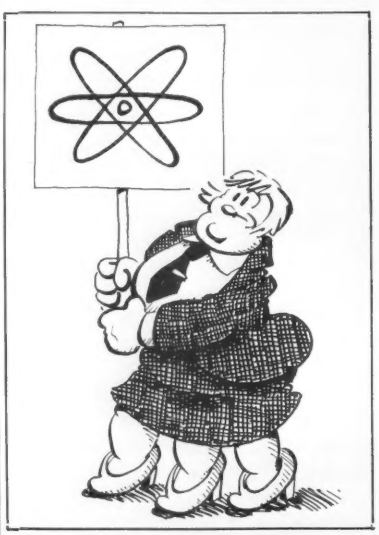
Produced by Chick Corea.
Co-produced by Stanley Clarke.

Carter had thought of taking severe government action against them, the Caddell poll doesn't show Americans with him. By a 54–20 percent margin, the country believed that only the oil companies are capable of financing our energy needs. But by a 43–29 percent margin we favor a federal chartering of the oil companies so the government can "oversee all operations."

Any plans the administration has of supporting nuclear power would be well received—52 percent wanted to see more nuclear power plants, 28 percent were opposed. However, by a 52–25 percent stretch, Americans opposed energy plans that will "degrade the environment or raise prices"; 61 percent declared themselves against increased strip mining and only 20 percent were for it.

Some of the figures bear the scars of the presidential campaign, then still fresh. Whereas in the third quarter of 1975, 38 percent of the respondents spoke for spending less on the defense budget and only 20 percent wanted to raise it, the most recent results looked different. If you were curious why the President didn't give the budget the severe shave he said he would, it might have a correlation to Caddell's findings. Thirty-seven percent of us wanted to spend *more* on defense in the fourth quarter of 1976; 31 percent thought we were spending about the right amount and 20 percent wanted a smaller defense budget.

Americans thought by 53–30 percent that workers should have "more say over how plants are actually run and managed." And flirting with socialism and Swedism, 36 percent favored "more equal salaries and



52 percent of Americans want to see more nuclear power plants

54 percent think that "unions are too involved in politics"

shares of ownership in the companies they work for" though 41 percent didn't. But love of labor hasn't yet been infused in the body politic: 54 percent think that unions are too involved in politics and only 22 percent disagree.

—*P. W. Kaplan*

Seventies

Unforbidden fruit

If man is the political animal, the grape must be the political fruit.

Grape lovers on the east coast who have been staying away from grapes in recent years because of the United Farm Workers boycott should know that the California bunches are not the only ones tied up in political controversy.

Summer fruit is normally a rare winter commodity in northeastern markets, but this year grapes, peaches and nectarines have been easy to find. Most of them are being shipped from Chile. Jose Palma, president of the Chilean Trading Bureau, reports gross sales of $21 million in the United States last year, and by all signs this year's windfall will be even more substantial. Almost all the sales occur during the Chilean harvest season, from the end of January to April. The produce is distributed from the ports of New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Chilean fruit sales have risen from $8 million in 1974 "The increase is an effect of the economic policies of the new government," says Palma. "We have increased our nontraditional [noncopper] exports by three times over the last three years. And we hope to double our exports of grapes in the next two years."

A less rosy view of the Chilean economic triumph comes from Susan Borenstein, national coordinator of the National Coordinating Center in Solidarity with Chile. "The effect inside the country is a disaster, because nontraditional exports are things you need," Borenstein says. "This is the Milton Friedman policy and the Chicago boys' idea: you export everything and let the people starve." Friedman is the Nobel laureate from the University of Chicago who has provided economic advice to the Chilean military government.

Borenstein says that although the coordinating center is authorized to launch a Chilean fruit boycott, there's no money available to print posters and other literature.

Sympathy for the devil

It's all very well to curl your conscience into a sneer when Roman Polanski's name comes up, as *Time*, *Newsweek* and NBC news did recently, but the least we can do for a

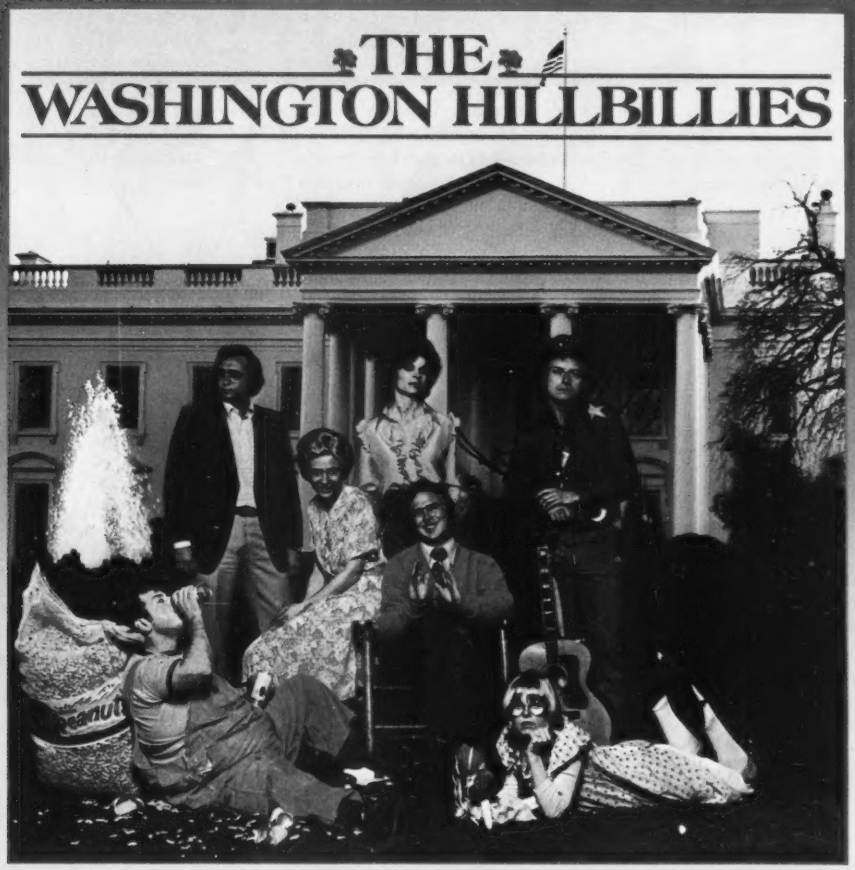
Polanski: Cocaine and young lace

latter-day demon is put him in context.

The facts, as reported: 42-year-old director of morally ambivalent movies lures innocent 13-year-old girl to superstar Jack Nicholson's Mulholland Drive home, ostensibly to photograph her for French *Vogue*; he then drugs and rapes her. The girl calls her mother for help and outraged Mom blows whistle. Period. As background, we are reminded that Polanski's late wife, Sharon Tate, a "child" bride herself, was murdered under mysterious circumstances by Charlie Manson's gang of crazies. Period again.

The trouble is, the smart set in Hollywood says it was a whole different movie. According to the word on Sunset, Polanski's little friend was not

Establishing A New President...



...In Comedy

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some innocent, but a very street-wise cocaine snorter who was having an affair with an acquaintance and rival of Polanski's, with whom Roman was feuding; apparently, Polanski decided the best way to get back at his friend was to sleep with his connection (she was something of a sex bomb).

The next morning, 13-year-old calls 12-year-old sister to brag about the fact that she's in Jack Nicholson's house with Roman Polanski; 13-year-old's 30-year-old stepmother (her fourth stepmother) overhears; 30-year-old Mom once dated Polanski, sees potential of situation; she calls cops, they bust Polanski; then, in return for not mentioning the name of Polanski's friend/rival, himself a Hollywood star of no little reputation and no small means, Mom and stepdaughter get a nice annuity. Presumably, 13-year-old retires from coke dealing. Movie ends happily. Cut and print.

Fastest gun in the world

L. E. Lisk, the truck-driver-turned-inventor, unlocked his safe in Greensboro, North Carolina, and unwrapped a chrome-plated machine gun. The other men in the room, all in dark suits and sunglasses and holding attaché cases, watched the gun, one finally asking quietly to fire the weapon, which looked like nothing so much as a Buck Rogers death-ray.

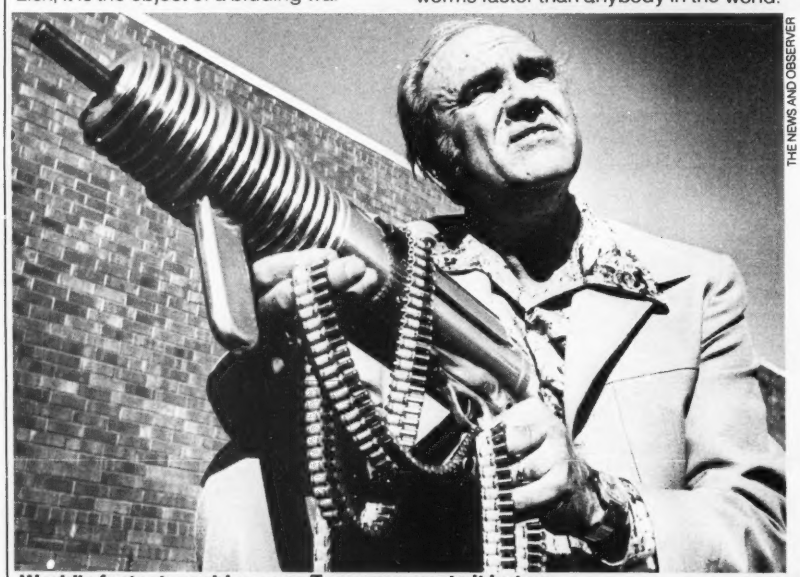
The gun is one of a kind—the Williams Model Seven machine gun. It fires three times faster than any machine gun now used by the world's armies. Designed by legendary gunmaker David M. "Carbine" Williams and bequeathed to his good friend Lisk, it is the object of a bidding war among at least five foreign governments. The hand-held weapon weighs 12 pounds and fires 2,000 rounds a minute—33 bullets a second.

Lisk wants to close a deal this month with a government he refuses to name. He says they will pay him $3 million down and 40 percent interest in a company formed especially to manufacture the weapon. So far he's been approached by agents of five nations, including Israel, Mexico and Belgium. "These people," Lisk says, "are talking about awful big money."

Two Israeli agents nodded approvingly after firing a few thousand rounds from the gun at a Greensboro police firing range, and slicing a wooden target in half. "They were tickled to death with it," Lisk recalls.

The inventor, Carbine Williams, came up with the M-1 Carbine used by soldiers in World War II while he was serving a prison term for shooting a federal agent who had discovered his whiskey still. He died in North Carolina in 1975, the millionaire owner of over 70 gun patents. Lisk says he worked with Williams on the Model Seven for the last ten years of the inventor's career. When the old gunmaker finally faded away he gave the working parts of his greatest creation to "L. E. Lisk, my best friend." The gun has none of the barrel lift common to machine guns, can be fired automatically or semiautomatically, and uses either .20 or .30 caliber rounds. Its recoil is negligible. It makes a buzzing noise because it is too rapid to produce the bang of less advanced guns.

"The whole business makes me kinda nervous," Lisk says. On his own, he'd invented fishing lures and a home built from plastic bottles. His real love is his company that "makes more plastic worms faster than anybody in the world."



THE NEWS AND OBSERVER

World's fastest machine gun: Everyone wants it but us

A Pentagon spokesman says the Army isn't aware of the gun, even though its firepower triples the 600-round-per-minute rate of our fastest machine gun, the M-60. Lisk doesn't want to sell it to the Pentagon anyway because of the red tape involved. Nor is he patenting it, preferring to let the purchasing government "worry about protecting it." Lisk liked dealing with the foreign buyers because, as he told a Belgian representative, "I don't speak your language, but I can count your money."

—David Zucchino

Long-playing plaintiffs

Charles and Jane Zoslaw own a little record shop in Mill Valley, California. It's a mama-papa operation, but its soft little grip has almost brought the giant record business to its great vinyl knees.

The Zoslaws brought suit on behalf of their Marin Music Centre against record companies including RCA, WEA, Columbia, ABC, Capitol and MCA, and against retailers like Tower and the Wherehouse, the two biggest in the West.

The Zoslaws were sick of the big companies merchandising records for lower prices to the chains who stocked thousands of their releases. For a kick in the shins, the couple brought a $500,000 suit charging monopoly, conspiracy and price fixing.

Most dangerous of all to the industry is the part of the Zoslaws' suit that challenges the right of companies like CBS to own subsidiaries, such as Discount Records and Pacific Stereo. At a hearing March 28, CBS asked to have this alleged violation of antitrust laws dismissed from the Marin charges in a partial summary judgment under "a more lenient provision" of the antitrust regulations.

On March 15, U.S. District Judge G.B. Harris denied a plaintiff's motion for a preliminary injunction against CBS and other companies that would have kept the corporations from selling to any retailer cheaper than they sold to Marin Music Centre. But the Zoslaws may yet best their giant antagonists. Insiders speculate that the Marin Music case was the catalyst for a mystery U. S. grand jury investigation into the record business that is currently striking fear into the hearts of virtually everyone connected with the multi-billion-dollar disc trade. The industry can only guess what the investigation concerns.

Grand jury subpoenas have been handed down to manufacturers as well as chain-retailers in California, in some cases down to the

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After all, if smoking isn't a pleasure, why bother?

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store-manager level. At a recent NARM (National Association of Record Merchandisers) convention, the biggest industry event of the years, attorneys were on hand to stifle pricing talk in all meetings. "You're talking in a room full of people," warned lawyer Earl Kintner. "Any pricing talk could be viewed as collusion."

Despite Judge Harris' handling of their motion, the Zoslaws clearly have shaken the industry to its roots, challenging the basic premises of its dealings and threatening to disassemble its conglomerations of ownings. It's said in L. A. that the bumptious couple who run the Marin Music Centre have caused the biggest stink in the record business since Clive Davis Bar Mitzvahed his son out of the CBS corporate coffers.

—John Mankiewicz

Taking Care of Business

Citizen Soldier

During the past decade, Mike Uhl and Tod Ensign have become household names—epithets, actually—among the top brass at the Pentagon. A political activist team that specializes in hammering away at the military establishment, Uhl and Ensign have, among other projects, spearheaded the Citizens Commission of Inquiry on U.S. War Crimes in Indochina and Safe Return, a leading amnesty organization. Both efforts caused considerable consternation among high-ranking "lifers" at the Defense Department.

Now, we've learned, Uhl and Ensign are training their sights on their biggest military target yet—the unionization of the 2.1 million members of the Armed Forces. In mid-April, "Citizen Soldier," an organization recently formed by the duo, will launch a massive effort to directly contact GIs to enlist their support for a military union. First step in the organizing campaign is the mailing of a tabloid newspaper to 30,000 GIs assigned to military installations in New Jersey, Maryland and the Washington, D.C., area, as well as to selected U.S. bases abroad. Other mass mailings, and eventual off-base meetings with the troops, are scheduled for later in the year. Says Uhl, "our task here is to establish the right of GIs to enter into collective bargaining. It's really an extension of the principles of industrial democracy to the military sector."

Are GIs ready for a union? Ensign and Uhl think they are, and point to a survey of Air Force personnel secretly undertaken (and subsequently suppressed for 6 months) by the Pentagon last year. To the statement, "I would join a military union," 35 percent of the Airmen polled answered "yes," 32 percent "no" and the remainder undecided.

"Traditionally," Uhl says, "there has been a coalition of interest between the right-wing and the professional GI. They have always linked arms ideologically around patriotism, duty and country. Now, GIs find they're taking second place to the defense industry. That old alliance between the GI and the Right will continue to erode as military benefits erode."

Some might be more concerned with exorbitant military pension programs than with potential erosion of benefits. But the organizing effort will be limited to nonsupervisory personnel, just as it is in other industries. The highest-ranking union member would likely be of the rank of First Sergeant, whose retirement option of half pay after 20 years of service amounts to about $7,000 a year. Most of those organized, of course, would retire at considerably less. Only in the higher ranks, which would not be covered by the union, are the most exorbitant pensions paid. In any case, it's far from certain that union pressure could be more successful than Pentagon lobbying in exacting pay raises.

There are, of course, powerful forces aligned against any unionization bid among military personnel. Speaking before an audience of Defense Department employees on March 1, President Carter indicated his own strong opposition to military unions. More recently, Secretary of Defense Brown told a group of VIPs he was privately escorting through the Pentagon War Room that a union "would not be appropriate to American military discipline." On Capitol Hill, Senator Strom Thurmond has introduced a bill prohibiting unionization of the military. The measure has already gathered 33 other senators as cosponsors. That bill has become a focus of ardent support by the grassroots Right, represented by a group called Americans Against Union Control of Government. AAUCG is already in the midst of a projected 8 million-piece mailing to conservatives around the country alerting the faithful to the coming control of our defense establishment by that bugaboo of the Right—"union bosses."

But the activists at "Citizen Soldier" are not without their own potential, powerful allies. Last September, the 300,000-strong American Federation of Government Employees amended its constitution to permit military membership in the union. At present, AFGE is involved in the final step before beginning the actual drive to sign up GIs as union members—a "referendum" of all AFGE locals to determine whether they are in favor of military unionization. The results of this plebiscite will not be known until October, but most observers assume that the AFGE rank-and-file will give the green light to organizing GIs. One important hurdle has already been cleared. AFL-CIO president George Meany, who publicly

UPI

Union rally of the future

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Since the tape in a cassette moves at only 1-7/8 inches per second, even the most minuscule variation in tape speed will make a major variation in sound.

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All of our tape drive components—the capstan, belt, and flywheel—are finished to incredible tolerances. Which give the 9191 the kind of wow and flutter figures that no deck in our price range can match.

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We also include a peak limiter to let you cram as much onto a cassette as possible without distortion. A memory that lets you go back to a favorite spot on the tape automatically. Separate bias and equalization switches for getting the most out of different brands of tape. And electronic solenoid controls for going from play to rewind, or from rewind to fast forward, without hitting the stop button. And without jamming the tape.

Go slip a cassette into a Pioneer 9191 at your local Pioneer dealer.

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CT-F9191 Specifications:

Frequency Response: Standard, I.H tape: 25-16,000 Hz (35-13,000 Hz ±3dB); CrO_2 tape: 20-17,000 Hz (30-14,000 Hz ±3dB)

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Harmonic Distortion: No more than 1.7% (OdB)

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Motor: Electronically-controlled DC motor (built-in generator) x 1; (4.8 cm/s speed drive), DC torque motor x 1; (Fast forward and rewind drive)

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has taken "no position" on military organizing, but was thought by many to oppose any such effort, has recently given private, but firm, assurances to Ken Blaylock, head of AFGE, that he will do nothing to hinder the formation of a military union.

What kind of marriage of interest will be consummated between the former antiwar activists of "Citizen Soldier" and the main-line labor leaders at AFGE remains to be determined. On paper, both organizations advocate similar programs designed to win for GIs the right to collective bargaining over issues such as benefits, pay, and health and safety conditions on the job. At this stage, neither AFGE, nor "Citizen Soldier," advocates bargaining over such sensitive issues as negotiating the chain of command, though Tod Ensign argues that a military union should adopt "the broadest definition of negotiations" when sitting down across the table from the brass. That's the sort of talk that troubles AFGE officials, who, like most AFL-CIO leaders, fear any unionizing strategy that is "more ideological than bread and butter." Ensign and Uhl counter that their own organizing materials are highly compatible with the aims of AFGE. Says Uhl, "We want to be catalysts, the pontoon bridge between GIs and the AFGE. We want our organizing to be a friendly and collateral effort."

Regardless of the eventual bargain struck between "Citizen Soldier" and the AFGE, the ultimate issues surrounding military unionization clearly go far beyond GI benefits and dress codes. How, for instance, will unionization affect the fighting capability of the Armed Forces? David Cortright, a leading proponent of a military union and a staff member of the Center for National Security Studies, has conducted extensive surveys of European military unions. According to Cortright, the military unions in the Netherlands have won troops sizable pay increases and eliminated inspections, severe punishments and needless harassment, while at the same time Dutch military efficiency and performance have increased.

Others argue that, the European experience notwithstanding, unionizing the American military will lead, as a spokesman for one conservative group puts it, to a "breakdown in military command, complete control by outsiders of the military, and lackadaisical troops subject to the whims and fancies of union bosses." These critics of GI unions conjure up combat situations in which an AFGE shop steward informs a commanding officer that the members of his union will not obey an order to move on the enemy because it violates a clause in the union contract.

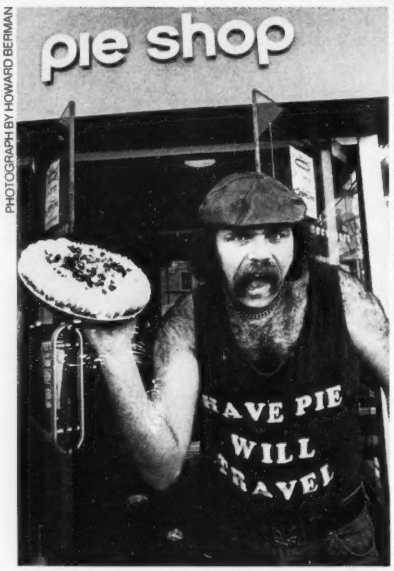
Still, a GI union may one day lead to a new class consciousness among troops who perceive themselves as workers, as well as defenders of the state. At certain moments in history, those two facets of their lives might come into direct conflict. Several years ago, in Portugal, soldiers there found themselves aligned with the nation's workers and poor against the military government. The outcome was a revolutionary transition in power.

—Ted Howard and Jeremy Rifkin

The Word

Pied sniper

PHOTOGRAPH BY HOWARD BERMAN



This is Aron Kay, 27, the Pied Sniper of New York. Latest of Kay's over 100 pie-ings took place at 6:47 p.m. on March 23 in the cavernous lobby of Rockefeller Center's RCA Building. There he slung very messy cocoanut cream on surprised E. Howard Hunt. As a hit man he hauls in $40 per fling—two parochial school students shelled it out to have Kay pie their teacher/nun. But no mercenary he: *sans* charge are jobs against those Kay feels have violated basic human rights in the name of national security. Already pied: Daniel P. Moynihan, William F. Buckley, Anthony Ulasewicz. Slated for future creaming: Ronald Reagan, John Mitchell, L.A.P.D. Chief Ed Davis, John Wayne, Milton Friedman, any Rockefeller.

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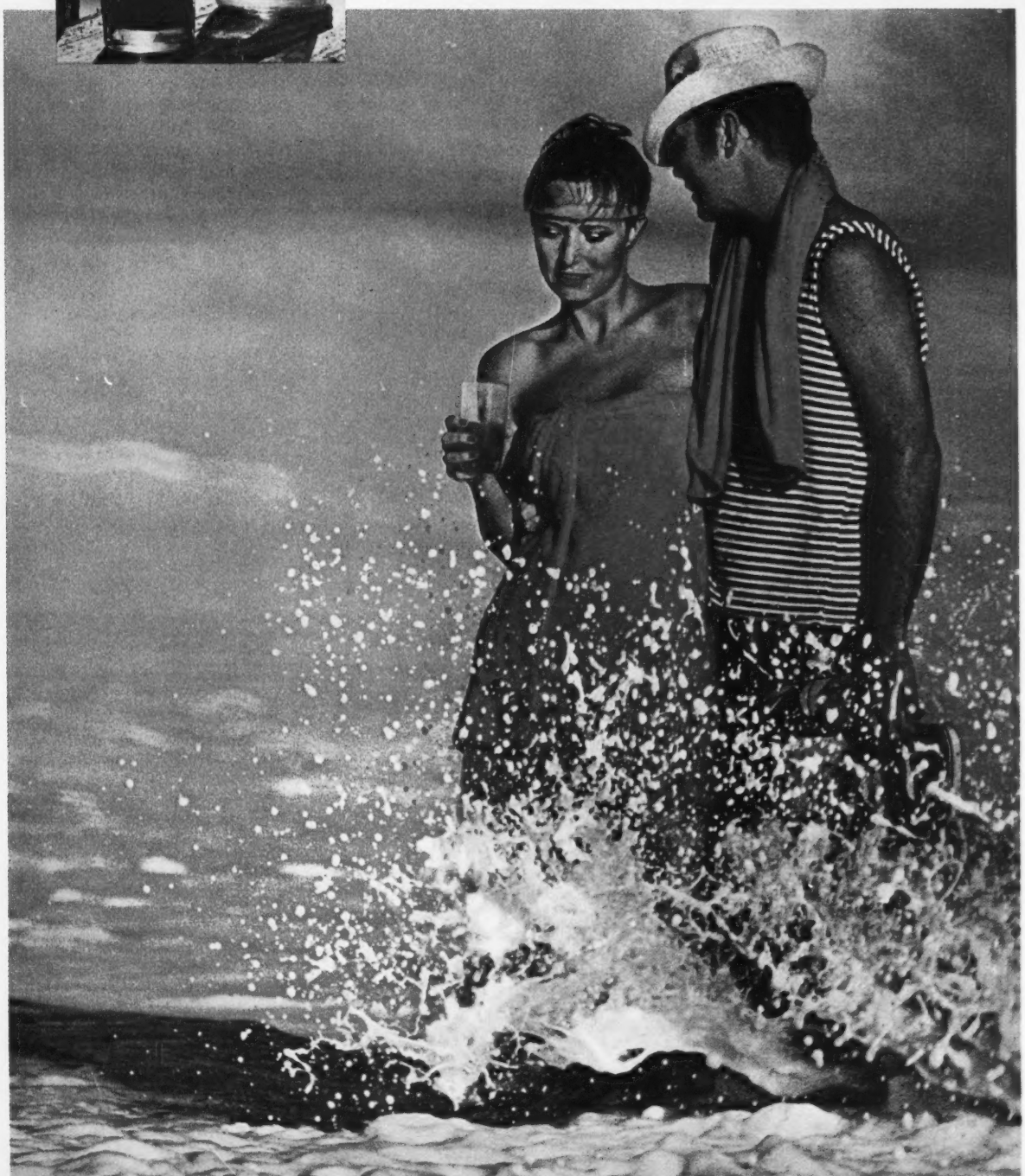

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THE SWEET TASTE OF EXCESS

Is sugar America's new enemy within?

By Jim Wright

The Panamanian freighter *Rowena* sits stolidly in the East River, Brooklyn, while a giant crane methodically bites huge mouthfuls of raw sugar—fresh from fields in the South Pacific—out of her hold and spits them into a warehouse on the dock.

Soon the dirty brown pile will be moved by bucket elevator to other areas on the waterfront, where it will be dissolved in warm water, chemically treated and filtered. Next, the clear liquid will be evaporated and boiled to make fine white granules. Then, measured and tucked into packets and bags of various sizes, it will be trucked to outlets across the Northeast, from Harlem to Columbus, Ohio.

By the time a 2.25-kilo bag hits the street and middlemen take their cut, its value will double. American users will have the hit to fuel their 85-pound-a-year habits.

The Brooklyn warehouse's interior resembles a backlot for *Lawrence of Arabia*. There is one immense dune, ripple after ripple, 30 feet high and a hockey rink long. The warehouse currently holds 20,000 tons of raw $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$. Sixty-three billion calories' worth of sugar.

There is enough sugar here to satisfy a typical high school class for a millenium. Enough to provide the sugar content for 415 million cans of ginger ale, give or take a sixpack. Enough to keep Weight Watchers, Inc., relevant. But not nearly enough to fill the U.S. public's craving for even a day.

Good and Deadly?

From morning cereal to midnight snack, sugar is the largest ingredient in the American diet. But, since the early seventies, the multi-billion-dollar sugar industry has been mired in price-fixing scandals, deceptive advertising practices and excessive profiteering. In one current antitrust case, three of eight Western sugar companies facing approximately 80 civil suits and a handful of criminal indictments have offered settlements totaling $24 million to industrial users: bakers, candy makers and soft-

drink bottlers. A source close to the litigation—which charges the refiners with several types of price fixing, dating to as early as 1949—said that the final judgments could reach $100 million, one of the highest in the history of antitrust actions. A similar battery of lawsuits against Eastern refiners is before a federal judge in Philadelphia. And there is new opposition of late:

• In one of its final acts, the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs released a report on dietary goals for the United States. Among its recommendations: "Reduce sugar consumption by almost 40 percent."

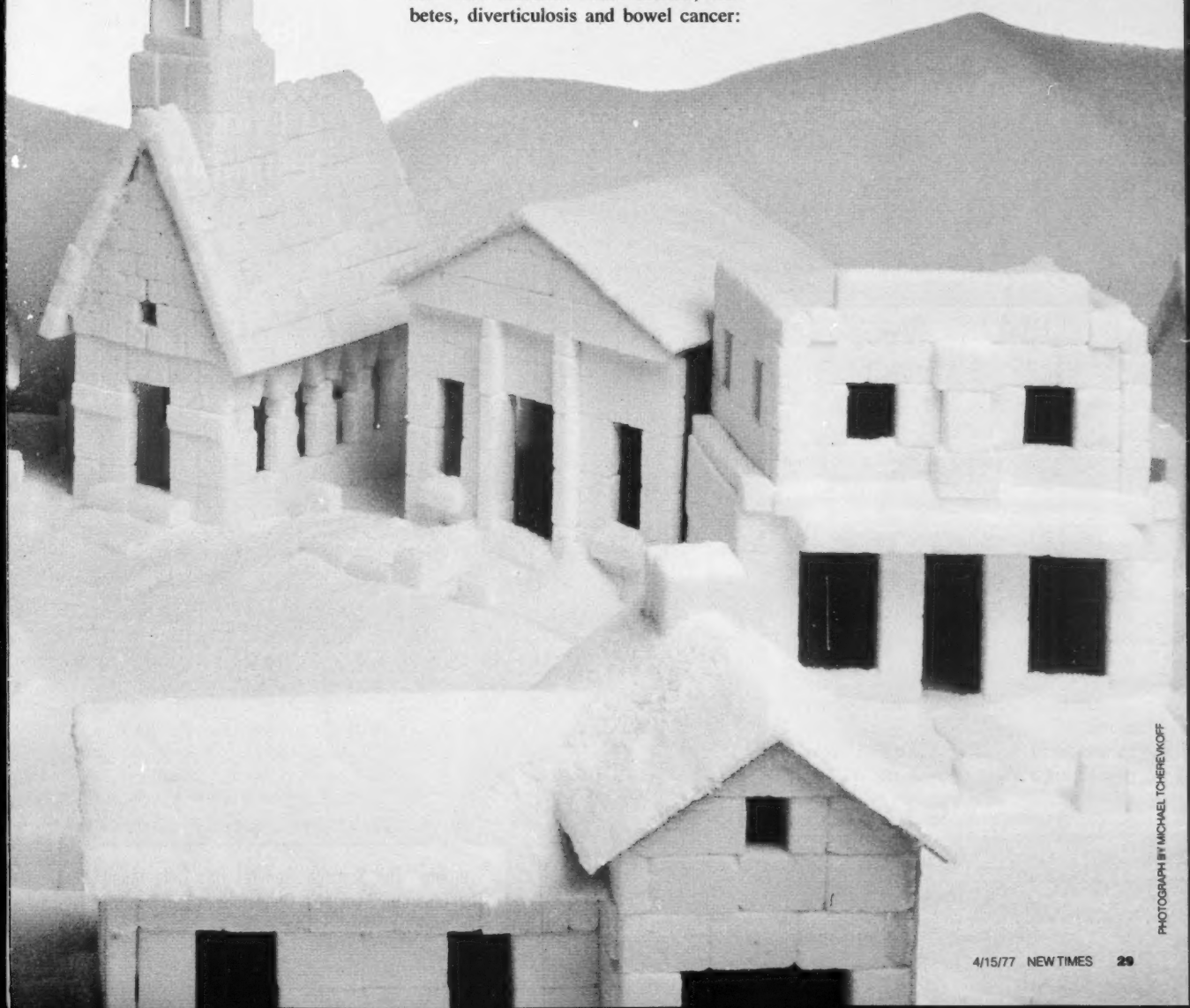
According to the report, the most immediate problem with sugar is that it has little nutritional value, displaces other foods high in micronutrients and may actually increase the body's needs for vitamins, such as thiamin, that are necessary to metabolize carbohydrates.

• In December, the Worldwatch Institute, an independent research group, issued a paper called "The Two Faces of Malnutrition." Citing a global per capita sugar-consumption increase of 50 percent since 1950, the study concluded that "health problems other than tooth decay—painful and expensive as that is—have apparently grown along with the world's sweet tooth. High sugar intake is linked by many to diabetes and other diseases."

The study adds that as the affluent diet—characterized by increases in fat and sugar consumption and decreases in starch, bulky foods and fiber—has spread, so have a wide variety of heretofore rare diseases: heart disease, diabetes, diverticulosis and bowel cancer: "Medical detectives are slowly unraveling the intricate web of interconnections that link the affluent diet to the various diseases of civilization. Combined with a sedentary lifestyle, high calorie consumption leads to obesity, which in turn encourages diabetes, hypertension and coronary heart disease."

• Late last November the consumer group, Action for Children's Television, held a symposium to underscore the evils inherent in commercials on programs aimed at the next Pepsi Generation. For most of the symposium's speakers, the major video villain was refined sugar, a prime ingredient in two-thirds of the food products advertised on kiddie shows.

• ACT also announced at the symposium the filing of a formal complaint against Mars, Inc., for a Milky Way commercial that told children to eat the candy bar "wherever you are . . . at work, rest, or play." ACT



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL TCHEREVKOFF

Benson & Hedges 100's

I just became a living testimonial.

that's the breaks.

Regular and Menthol

18 mg. "tar," 1.0 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Dec. '76.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

claims that the ad is deceptive because it "fails to indicate the dangers from consistent and frequent consumption of such candy bars."

• Earlier this year Baker/Beech-Nut Corporation announced it would eliminate added sugar from all its baby foods, except for products that require sweetening to balance natural acids. The move was the result of prodding from nutritionists, who claimed that sugar leads to problems such as an early sweet tooth and excessive sugar consumption in later years.

Refined sugar—sucrose—is a carbohydrate derived from processing the natural sugars in sugarcane and sugar beets until all impurities are removed. Unlike most carbohydrate-rich foods, however, sucrose is a virtually pure chemical. When digested, sucrose molecules rapidly break down in the intestine into two simpler molecules, glucose (blood sugar) and fructose, which in turn are soon absorbed into the bloodstream. The fructose is converted into glucose by the liver. The body uses the glucose for energy, and any excess glucose is converted into fat.

Complex carbohydrates, as contained in fruit, vegetables, rice and grain, are also broken down into glucose, but the process takes longer. Says Dr. F. Xavier Pi-Sunyer, an endrocrinologist at St. Luke's Hospital in New York City, "When you take starch or complex carbohydrate, it takes longer to digest, so you generally don't get a rapid absorption like you do with sugar. And the glucose in the blood doesn't go up as high, which is one of the reasons diabetics are told not to eat sugar. If they take a lot of refined sugar, they get hyperglycemic—they can't handle it all, the blood sugar gets too high, and they spill it in the urine and lose the calories. With the calories, they lose water, sodium and potassium. So they're told to eat starch, which is absorbed more gradually and the sugar in the blood never gets so high."

According to Pi-Sunyer, excessive sugar intake "may cause a slightly greater amount of insulin to come out of the pancreas, and the higher insulin effect could possibly have a long-term prognosis, but I'm not exactly sure what it is. Some people say that hyperinsulinism causes people to be hungrier. It might affect the way they dispose of fats, but all of this data is very murky."

Jim Wright, a reporter with The Record *in Bergen County, New Jersey, stopped taking sugar with his coffee in 1974 and never looked back. This is his first feature article for* New Times.

Some studies have also traced elevated fat levels in the blood and impaired glucose tolerance to high sugar consumption, though there is enough conflicting evidence to make those links debatable.

And that's the hub of the sugar conundrum: nutrition is not a bell-jar science. For every scientist who says refined sugar directly or indirectly causes diabetes or heart disease, for example, there's a researcher down the hall blowing the whistle on cholesterol or fat.

Indeed, there's an entirely different school of thought on the roots of modern man's maladies, as characterized by Dr. E. L. Bierman of the University of Washington, former chairman of the Food and Nutrition Committee of the American Diabetes Association. He says: "The real diet problem is calories, not sugar. It makes no difference where the excess calories come from. With the population at large, it's the total calories that are associated with the ills of advanced Westernized society—gallstones, diabetes, hypertension. There's no evidence that sugar is different from any other carbohydrate in man."

"When you consume 20 percent of your calories from sugar, that means you have to get all of your nutrients from 80 percent of your food. It's unlikely that you're going to get them," says Michael Jacobson

Pi-Sunyer, however, agrees with the nutritionists who urge reduced sugar intake because of sugar's lack of nutritional qualities: "My philosophy on sugar is that we're probably eating too much. It's a food that is a refined substance that has only calories and none of the vitamins. You're much better off getting your carbohydrate from sources that have other nutrients with them."

The human body has no biological need for refined sugar that can't be met by more nutritious foods. In a country where Jack LaLanne, Ayds and 18-Hour girdles flourish and one-fifth of the public is dangerously overweight, most people need empty calories as much as Richard Nixon needs Carl Bernstein. Similarly, the fact that Americans consume 85 pounds of refined sugar a year—and another 20 pounds of other types of added sugars, primarily high-fructose corn sweetener—to make their foods palatable, says more about the sorry quality of the nation's cuisine than it does about any inherent need for sugar.

Although tests with newborn babies at the University of Pennsylvania's Monell Chemical Senses Center indicate that human beings have an inborn preference for sweet-tasting foods, many scientists and nutritionists believe that sugary baby foods train infants to have sweet tooths for the rest of their lives. Says Dr. George Cahill, professor of medicine at Harvard, who works on metabolic diseases, "Baby foods have added sugar to make the baby eat more, which makes the mother feel better. The baby gets fatter, looks healthier. But the baby is trained from day zero to be a sweetnik. Our kids eat for sweetness, which is why they'd rather chew Sugar Smacks than a piece of meat or an apple. It's nutritional statutory rape."

Sweetness and Blight

Sugar consumption as national pastime is a relatively recent phenomenon. Until the mid-1800s, sugar was used mostly as an additive, like salt or pepper. It was too expensive to be popular. Americans consumed, per capita, less than 25 pounds a year.

Then, according to one popular if apocryphal account, an enterprising teacher at the Boston Cooking School turned the school's recipes into a blockbuster cookbook at the turn of the century. Her formula for success—add sugar to almost every recipe—neatly dovetailed with sugar's growing availability.

Fannie Farmer was her name, and her techniques have become a legacy for food processors the country over. The Senate Select Committee report attributes the increased use of sugar in large part "to the desire of food manufacturers to create unique food products with a competitive edge. Just recently, for example, Nabisco introduced an Oreo cookie with double the amount of sugar filling. Robert Buzzell and Robert Nourse in *Product Innovation in Food Processing* report that the addition of sugar to cereal in 1948 was the direct cause of recovery of slumping cereal sales. Since then the varieties of sweetened cereals have grown dramatically."

Ample doses of sugar flourish in other processed foods and beverages as well. Sugar or corn syrup is the *largest* ingredient in the following products: General Foods' Cafe Vienna; Hawaiian Punch frozen concentrate; Shake 'n Bake, Barbecue Style; La Choy's sukiyaki sauce mix; Ovaltine; Tang; Carnation Breakfast Bars; Wish-Bone Russian salad dressing; Jell-o gelatin des-

Sugar: a short, sticky history

Federal manipulation of sugar is as old as the nation. One of the many underlying causes of the American Revolution was the exorbitant British sugar tariff, yet no sooner had the colonies won their independence than they adopted a similar tariff.

On July 4, 1789, Congress levied duties on several luxury items: liquor, coffee, cheese, candles, paper playing cards—and sugar. Though the sugar tariff's size fluctuated over the years, its purpose until the Depression was to raise revenue. The Sugar Act of 1934 changed all that.

Passed in the early New Deal days, the act was partly an emergency measure to aid Cuba, then on the brink of economic collapse. The act made Cuba the main source of imported sugar, with an annual quota that eventually reached 3 million tons with a bonus as high as $70 over the average world price on every ton. Ostensibly, the bonus would guarantee the U.S. a regular supply of sugar at stable prices, even in times of war, but the large bonuses served another purpose: a dandy political weapon wielded by the State Department and Congress to reward (or punish) Cuba and, later, 31 other countries. (For example, in 1969, the 17,419-ton quota for Haiti, during François "Papa Doc" Duvalier's reign of terror, netted him $1,150,000.)

The domestic effects of the Sugar Act were equally devastating: it gave the Department of Agriculture total control of the U.S. sugar industry; it dictated who could grow sugar, how much they could grow and how much they could charge for it. The result? Favored domestic growers were assured a market for their sugar at up to triple the world price. The government also gave domestic producers an average of $90 million in subsidies each year.

To appease the domestic refiners now forced to pay highly inflated prices for sugar, the act also banned the importation of refined sugar. This gave U.S. refiners a neat monopoly; never would they have to worry about a foreign refiner undercutting their prices.

As a whole, the Sugar Act was everybody's darling—from foreign countries who toed the U.S. foreign-policy line to domestic growers and refiners—everybody, in fact, but the American public. A 1974 study by Professor D. Gale Johnson of the University of Chicago estimated that the Sugar Act cost consumers as much as $730 million a year.

Over the years, the Sugar Act created another highly profitable industry in this country, the foreign sugar lobby, which consisted of American lobbyists who vied for slices of the import quota pie after Cuba went Communist. Somehow, countries employing lobbyists with close ties to the federal government usually seemed to receive the biggest cuts; nations such as Guatemala, Liberia and Thailand have found it useful to employ ex-congressmen as their sugar reps on Capitol Hill.

In 1974, four decades after the first Sugar Act, Congress finally voted 209–175 to kill it. But by then, sugar in the U.S. was sinking from the weight of other problems as well.

For sugar interests, 1974 was the best of times and the worst of times.

Raw sugar sold for about a dime a pound during the early 1970s. Then, from January to December 1974, the market went berserk. At one point raw sugar cost 65 cents a pound. In New York City, a five-pound bag that cost 80 cents in January was $2.79 by year's end. For most of the year, Americans were too preoccupied with the gasoline crisis and the recession to pay much attention to the inflated prices of sugar, which the industry attributed to a not-so-merry-go-round of tightening supplies and increasing demand.

At the end of October, the industry released its latest profit statements. Amstar, the largest refiner, announced a 250 percent jump in net income. Great Western United, the largest beet sugar refiner, had a 1,120 percent gain. Said Amstar president Robert T. Quittmeyer in one of the all-time understatements, "Profitability has finally come to our industry."

The rebellion began. Some actions were predictable. The Council on Wage and Price Stability did what it does best—held hearings. Supermarkets urged customers to stop buying so much sugar. Some even resorted to rationing. Restaurants took sugar off tables. When sugar prices hit 65 cents a pound, President Ford went into action: he told Americans to eat less. Nothing worked.

And so the "radicals" moved in. In the East, consumers stockpiled sugar. One Midwest speculator stashed more than a ton in a tarp-covered field. Southern California sugar shoppers drove to Mexico, where sugar sold at one-fifth the U.S. price. Then came the guerrillas. A handful of Oakland crazies raided a sugar warehouse and absconded with a 100-pound sack worth $50. The end of the madness came on December 16, when three consumer groups joined the mayor of Hartford, Connecticut, in dumping *fake* sugar into the Connecticut River to protest the high prices. A symbolic conclusion had been reached: Americans couldn't live with sugar anymore, nor could they live without it.

Shortly after this, a San Francisco federal grand jury indicted six refiners on price-fixing charges. The 1934 Sugar Act was about to expire, finally putting an end to the out-of-sync, much inflated quotas. By this time, though, the prospect of ongoing soaring prices and the threat of the so-called "shortage" had caused an all-out scare in consumer buying. Quittmeyer commented that at the peak, American households had squirreled away 750,000 tons, a normal three-month consumer purchase. The refineries had kept up with consumer demand (it soon became apparent that no shortage had existed) and, indeed, buying came to a virtual standstill. Needless to say, prices soon began to stabilize.

Raw sugar prices currently hover just above their pre-1974 figures, but indications are that they are likely to rise soon. Delegates from Latin America sugar-exporting countries met in Cuba in early March to discuss ways to boost the low prices, and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland said in mid-February that he is considering a plan to reduce sugar imports and to set raw sugar price supports at 13 to 14 cents per pound (a 30 percent increase). This would aid domestic cane and sugar beet growers. American refiners claim that the plan before Bergland could cost consumers $1 billion a year.

sert . . . And the list could go on.

The newfound emphasis on sugar in this century can also be traced to two other factors—improvements in sugar refining technology and rising incomes—and it has had a profound effect on the typical American diet. Foods such as fruits, vegetables and grains, high in complex carbohydrates and once the heart of the diet, have now been largely supplanted by a diet rich in fat and sugar.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics released this January, annual per-capita consumption of complex carbohydrates has dropped dramatically in the past 30 years. There have been decreases of 18 pounds in vegetables, 31 pounds in flour and cereal products, 21 pounds in potatoes and 20 pounds in fruit.

Fat and sugar now compose three-fifths of the total calories consumed—up 20 percent since the early 1900s. The use of sugar in beverages alone climbed from 3.5 pounds at the beginning of the century to 22 pounds in the 1970s. The increase in fat intake has been attributed to higher consumption of salad and cooking oils, dairy products, shortening, meat and margarine.

After consulting numerous doctors and nutritionists, the Senate Select Committee reported: "These and other changes in the diet amount to a wave of malnutrition—of both over- and underconsumption—that may be as profoundly damaging to the nation's health as the contagious diseases of the early part of the century."

Supporting that conclusion is Dr. Michael Jacobson, a microbiologist and director of the nutrition branch of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), a nonprofit consumer group. After investigating the safety of many lesser known additives, Jacobson and his group took a look at sucrose in the American diet.

"Twenty percent of our diet on the average is refined sugar—a tremendous amount, more than any other constituent," says Jacobson. He is sitting in his office at the center's headquarters, a partially renovated row home in northwest Washington, D.C. "When you consume 20 percent of your calories from sugar, that means you have to get all of your nutrients from 80 percent of your food. It's unlikely that you're going to get them. There are government studies, such as the Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, that show that surprisingly high percentages of the population are not consuming the recommended daily allowances of nutrients, and one reason is that sugar is displacing other foods from the diet.

"The leveling-off of the sugar intake for the past 50 years is deceptive because we're consuming less calories now than we did then," Jacobson says as he leans back in his chair. "Sugar's not killing us by direct effect, but it's pushing good foods, good nutrients, out of the diet, and it's hard to know what the effect is going to be."

One thing is certain: sugar has become so ubiquitous in American food that even diehards who want to eliminate it from their diets find the task nearly impossible. You can avoid every obvious source of sugar—soft drinks, candy, gum, pastry, ice cream—and still get a not-so-healthy dose everyday.

Nearly 70 percent of the nation's sucrose is now consumed in processed foods, and because of bureaucratic foot-dragging in truth-in-labeling laws, only a laboratory can determine how much is on your dinner plate. According to a survey of the food industry by the National Research Council, the amount of sucrose in processed foods actually doubled between 1960 and 1970.

Medical detectives are slowly unraveling the web of interconnections that link the affluent diet to the various diseases of civilization . . . a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease

That change is reflected in the NRC's figures for the current levels of *added* sucrose in various food categories: 11 percent in baked goods and baking mixes; 26 percent in cereal; 18 percent in milk products; 24.5 percent in processed cheese; 13 percent in processed vegetables and juices; 13 percent in nonalcoholic beverages.

Those figures are particularly distressing to Dr. Alan C. Levin of the New York Institute for Child Development, an eastside Manhattan clinic that treats hyperactive youngsters. Sitting behind a desk stacked with five-hour glucose tolerance tests, which measure his patients' sugar-intake metabolism, Levin tells of a therapy session held last November 1: "We tried to work with the kids, but it was impossible. They were hyperactive and irritable, throwing things, shouting, fighting with each other. They were out of their skulls—all because of the candy and crap they had eaten the night before, Halloween."

Levin is quick to point out that sugar is not the sole cause of hyperactivity, citing a combination of biochemical, physical and psychological factors, but he does say flatly, "Out of 300 hyperactive children we've given glucose tolerance tests, almost all had abnormal sugar curves. We took them off sugar and put them on high-protein diets, and 80 percent toned down. They became less distractible and easier to teach. Sugar is no good and should not be a main ingredient in children's diets. If we just consumed natural sugars, such as those found in fruit, vegetables and milk, we'd have lot less of a problem."

The Men with the Silver Spoon

If sucrose has been under siege these past few years, the nerve center of its defense, the Sugar Association, seems to be enduring the barrages from antisugar philistines such as Levin, Jacobson and ACT quite calmly.

Ensconced in their well-appointed offices on the tenth floor of a Washington high-rise, three blocks from the White House, the association's triumvirate, president John W. Tatem Jr., public relations director Jack O'Connell Jr. and scientific director Dr. G. Norris Bollenback, seldom take the offensive these days. They are content to fight the good fight with policy statements, testimony before congressional hearings, letters to the editors of offending magazines and a variety of public relations tools.

During an interview, Tatem sits on a beige velour sofa, answering questions coolly, if not always directly.

His position on Americans' average annual per capita consumption of 85 pounds of sugar: "Sugar taken in moderation, and we consider the present levels of per capita consumption as moderation, is a useful part of our food supply. It's one of the cheapest forms of energy. It's a carbohydrate, and carbohydrates are necessary for a good, balanced diet."

But is sugar necessary? "No one food is absolutely necessary," Tatem replies with a puff of his cigarette. "But areas of food are. Carbohydrates are necessary, proteins are necessary, fats are necessary. . . . The amount of sugar you normally take in a good, normal diet is so small that it doesn't really matter."

O'Connell, who sits by Tatem's side, adds, "You can't overemphasize palatability. Sugar encourages the consumption of other foods that contain vitamins, minerals and fiber. The desire

for sugar is innate. Sugar is the catalyst that makes eating pleasurable, and eating is life-sustaining."

As O'Connell polishes off his bottle of Coke, Bollenback picks up the slack: "In many foods sugar acts as a preservative because when you have sugar in high concentration, it cuts down the water that would be available for microorganisms to grow. And it has a very definite effect on flavors—you can take a formula that tastes like nothing until you put sugar in. It seems to bring all the ingredients of a product together."

For this trio, sugar has a neatly ordered role in the overall nutrition picture: those who seek to upset that conception are met with carefully measured rebuttals. Take ACT. According to Tatem, "It started out with a good idea in mind—to stop bombarding kids with slick advertising without any regard to nutritional qualities—but it has become vicious."

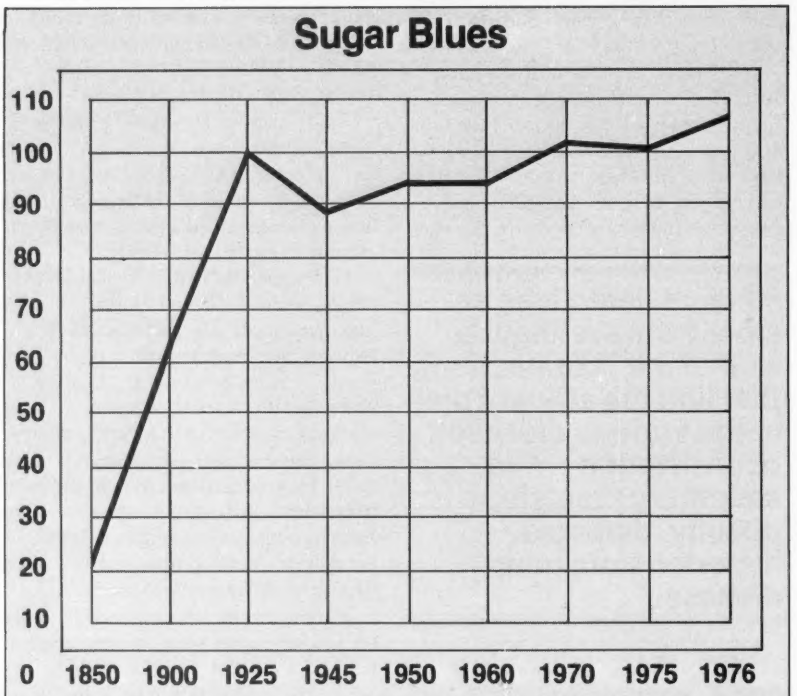
Nor are they enamored of the New York Institute for Child Development. Says Bollenback, "We don't know of any firm evidence—we don't know of any sketchy evidence—that associates sugar with hyperactivity in children. If you pay attention to something, you're going to get an entirely different effect from them than if you didn't pay attention. Apparently the kids who are hyperactive are, among other things, suffering from lack of attention. In watching their diets and making sure they're eating the right things, they're getting attention. Even the people who are saying that it's high carbohydrate that's making kids hyperactive agree. It's a behavioral thing. To try to select one element out of a diet, which again is one larger element in a great big picture, is pretty dangerous."

Though O'Connell says that one of the association's goals is to foster research—"We actively seek proposals; if you came across a doctor in New York or Boston who said he thought sugar causes German measles, we'd be delighted if you'd send him to us; we'd search it out scientifically"—Tatem offers a different story when the question of funding for hyperactivity research is raised: "We haven't done anything in that area because the medical people that we consult for approval do not consider this a priority. The dental cavities area is the big area . . . we'd like to put more money into dental cavities to find preventive measures, rather than find what causes them [*sic*]."

The only time during the hour-and-a-half discussion that any of the men became agitated was when there was mention of the Senate Select Committee's report, which advocated a 40 percent reduction in sucrose intake. "It's a misuse of statistics," says Tatem. "Conflicting evidence from, in a lot of cases, more qualified people [such as Dr. Bierman] was not even considered. One big thing is that a study sponsored by FDA, called the GRAS [Generally Regarded As Safe] Review, stated that sugar at present levels of use, aside from its dental cavities factor, is safe and not causative in such death-dealing ills as heart disease and diabetes and is not a hazard to the health."

A constant complaint from O'Connell and others within the sugar industry is that much of the information that reaches the public on refined sugar is inaccurate. "So much of the stuff is written by lay people, not science writers," says O'Connell. "A food editor does a sugar column one day and then writes a dress column tomorrow. She's in such a hurry that she never checks with us to see if what she says is true."

O'Connell's lament is often justified, but then the sugar industry itself is responsible for a lot of nonsense too. Take a series of magazine advertise-



U.S. Department of Agriculture 1977 Figures (adjusted) on Sugar and Caloric Sweetener Consumption (pounds per capita)

Since 1850, per capita consumption of sugar in the U.S. has risen from slightly less than 25 to slightly more than 85 pounds per year. By 1900, wider markets, more industry and higher incomes had combined to hook Americans on a sugar habit that grew—with notable declines during World War II, after Cuba went Communist, and during the 1973–74 sugar price-fixing scandal—without relief. Food manufacturers, seeing that fast energy and faster meals were what was happening, simply dumped sugar into everything. Since there were more teenagers and subteens in the population in each generation, and since they'd all been virtually weaned from milk to soda as soon as they'd been pried off their mothers' bosoms, things worked out nicely. Convenience foods, with their myriad uses for caloric sweeteners; the food stamp program, with its emphasis on baked goods, candy and pop; and even the withdrawal of cyclamates and their replacement by artificial sweeteners kept the habit growing. A recent Department of Agriculture study breaks American sugar consumption down in the following ways: cereal and bakery products, 15 pounds per person per year; confectionary products, 9.3; processed foods and vegetables, 8.9; ice cream and related dairy products, 5; cured meat and syrup blends, 2.3; soft drinks and other beverages, 19.3; restaurant consumption (table sugar), 4.7; home use (table and cooking), 21.

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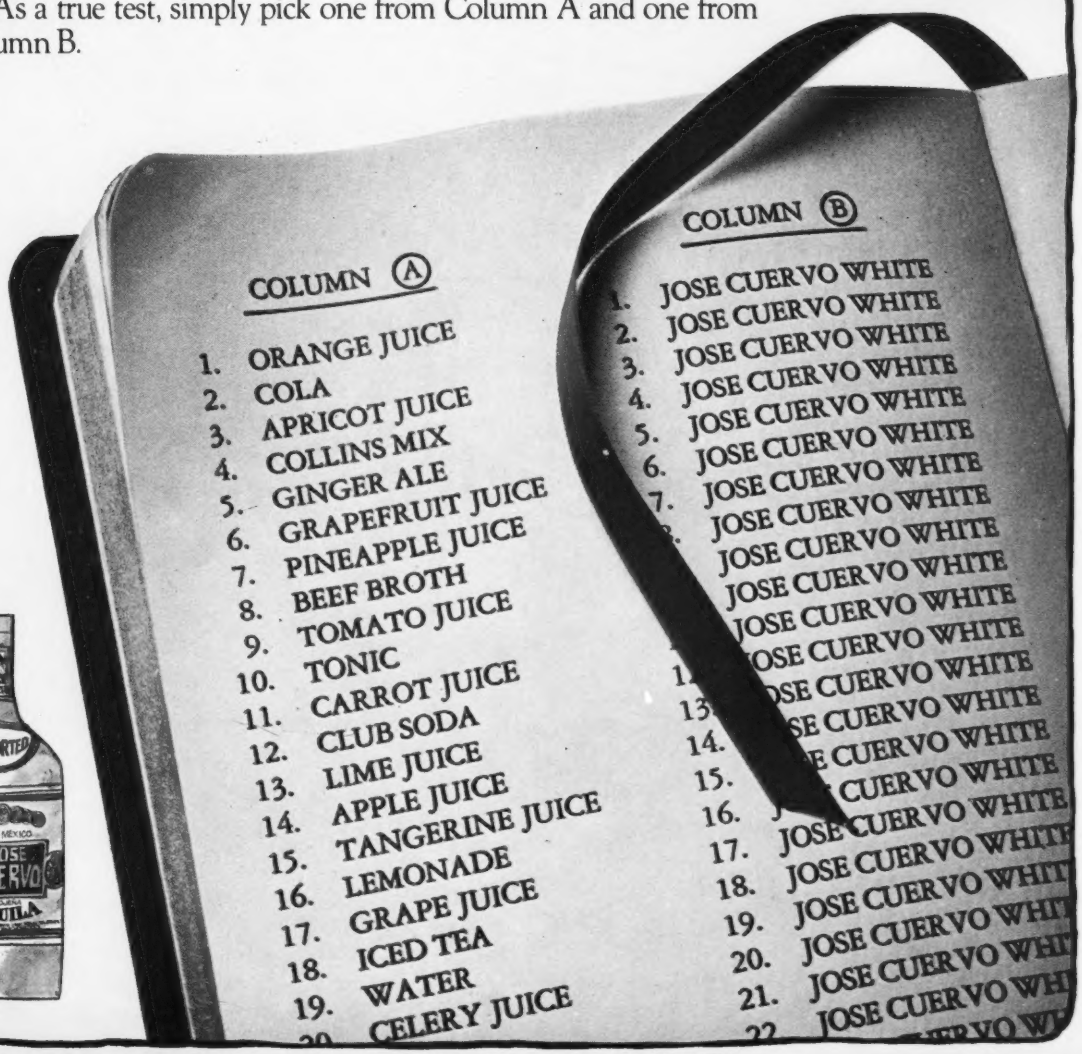

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Calorie conundrum: Sugar is everywhere; in cereal, steak sauce, peanut butter, even melba toast. Soft drinks list it as a prime ingredient; Ritz crackers use sugar and corn sweetener; so-called gourmet coffee is highly saturated

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB LICHTMAN

ments that a branch of the Sugar Association ran in the early 1970s. One typical ad featured a photo of a man munching a candy bar in quiet ecstacy, with text that read: "Snack on some candy about an hour before lunch. Sugar's quick energy can be the willpower you need to eat less. . . . The sugar in a soft drink or ice cream cone, shortly before mealtime, turns into energy fast. And that energy could be just the energy you need to say 'no' to those extra helpings at mealtime. . . . Sugar . . . only 18 calories per teaspoon, and it's all energy."

The advertisement was banned by the FTC as "false, misleading and deceptive."

A similar Sugar Association ad campaign, which blithely claimed that sugar "isn't just good flavor, it's good food," was shot down by the National Advertising Review Board.

At the other extreme are the quacks who take to television talk shows to sensationalize sugar's effects on the body and hype their latest health book in the process. One well-known talk show doctor actually has his Ph.D. in education, and from most accounts has never taken a course in nutrition.

Then there's *Sugar Blues*, a health food store bestseller by William Dufty, whose credentials as an antisugar crusader are based largely on his personal bouts with sugar "addiction." In his book, which is a blanket condemnation of refined sugar, Dufty rushes in where scientists and nutritionists fear to tread: besides blaming sucrose for tooth decay, coronary thrombosis, hypoglycemia, diabetes and obesity, he also claims that sugar causes acne, sunburn, freckles, migraine, tuberculosis, varicose veins and menstrual cramps.

Unfortunately, the information on refined sugar that comes from nutrition professors and researchers often has questionable origins. Witness the case of Dr. Frederick Stare. Now retired from the chairmanship of Harvard's prestigious Department of Nutrition, Stare still teaches and writes a twice-weekly syndicated column on nutrition. For many consumer advocates, Stare is to sugar what Rabbi Korff is to Richard Nixon.

Stare best summed up his philosophy on sugar in early 1974 in an interview with *W*, the biweekly version of *Women's Wear Daily*. "[The world has] to cultivate foods that require as little land as possible to produce a maximum amount of energy. For instance, it takes .15 acres of land to produce a million calories of sugar; it takes 17 acres of land to produce a million calories of meat. Calories are energy, and I would recommend that most people could healthily double their sugar intake daily."

The statement is not quite so astounding when you consider some information about Stare and Harvard that was disclosed last August by Congressman Benjamin Rosenthal, chairman of the subcommittee on consumer affairs, and CSPI in a study called "Feeding at the Company Trough," which contained more than a dozen instances of potential conflicts of interest between nutrition professors or departments and corporate funding.

The study cites a 1973 Harvard report that lists such donors to the Department of Nutrition as the Sugar Association, Amstar, Coca-Cola, the International Sugar Research Foundation and Kellogg. The food industry provided about $2 million from 1971 to 1974 to the university.

Stare says his only squabble with corporate funding is that there isn't enough of it: "All of corporate support together makes up only 7 or 8 percent of our total budget, so it's not really a hell of a lot. I wish it were two or three times

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that amount, as long as it's a completely unrestricted grant. We wouldn't be able to provide half the student fellowships we do, were it not for corporate funding," Stare adds. "It has never influenced what we work on, what we write or what we say."

According to the CSPI report, in the three years after Stare told a congressional hearing on cereals and nutrition that "breakfast cereals are good foods," Harvard's School of Public Health received about $200,000 from Nabisco and Kellogg.

CSPI's Jacobson, who coordinated the study, says he decided to investigate the funding of nutrition departments because there had never been any questioning of a rather dubious practice: "The funding doesn't mean automatically that professors are prostituting themselves, but this information should be readily available to the public. Now it's all so secret, and these people are totally

In sugar we trust: America's habit is strong because of subliminal support

embarrassed about who they're working for. I think the overall effect has not been so much what these people are saying but that almost the whole nutrition community has been castrated and just refuses to stand up for the public. How many nutritionists are putting pressure on the government to control sugar and control fat? Almost nobody. All these nutrition professors make these lofty statements about how awful health food fanatics are and totally miss the larger problem. Meanwhile, Betty Crocker, Aunt Jemima and Tony the Tiger have taken over the industry."

On the other hand, the sugar industry maintains that two of the leading spokesmen against sugar, Dr. Jean Mayer, president of Tufts University and former Harvard nutrition professor, and Dr. John Yudkin, a British physician and biochemist, have equally dubious corporate connections.

Mayer, perhaps the top antisugar man in the United States, has assisted consumer groups and Senate committees and has condemned sugar in magazine articles and in his syndicated nutrition column. Mayer also serves on the board of directors of both Monsanto, which has manufactured saccharin, and Miles Labs, which makes food flavorings and other additives.

The Sugar Association's Jack O'Connell says that not only are Mayer's antisugar claims mostly unsubstantiated, but that Mayer started writing his sugar criticism when Monsanto was a producer of saccharin: "That's a conflict of interest. If you're the director of a company that makes a competing substance, you shouldn't write as an independent scientist—you ought to disqualify yourself." A spokeswoman for Mayer, however, says that Monsanto stopped producing saccharin several years *before* Mayer became a director of the company in 1970. (When contacted, Monsanto stated that it produced saccharin until 1972.)

Yudkin, who claims in his popular paperback, *Sweet and Dangerous*, that "if only a small fraction of what is already known about the effects of sugar were to be revealed in relation to any other material used as a food additive, that material would promptly be banned," is best known for his research linking sugar consumption to heart disease. But, O'Connell points out, Yudkin has been a paid adviser to Britain's National Dairy Council, whose products' high-fat contents are often associated with arteriosclerosis; thus Yudkin is involved in a conflict of interest.

The Secret Meaning of Things

No end is in sight for this enormous taffy pull over sugar's worth, but if Congress should ever decide to enact tough truth-in-labeling laws, at least the consumer will know exactly where he's getting his annual 85-pound dose of sugar—and what to avoid if he's concerned about his sucrose intake.

Currently, ingredients on most food products must be listed in decreasing order of quantity, but the percentage and amount of each ingredient remain a mystery. Even though the labeling of nutritional properties is not required, some companies do it; however, the sugar content is always hidden in the carbohydrate total. For instance, an ardent label decoder can deduce by reading the label on Sealtest's "all natural flavor" Light n' Lively pineapple low-fat yogurt that sugar is the second largest ingredient (it also contains corn sweetener), but there is no way of knowing how much of the carbohydrate listed—50 grams—is sugar.

Though both the Senate Select Committee's report and the GRAS Review on sucrose advocate stronger labeling, and though the Sugar Association and consumer advocates believe that the U.S. will adopt percentage labeling within the next two years, those closest to the legislation—HR 42, the Consumer Food Labeling Act—are less optimistic.

Says Douglas Bloomfield, an aide to Congressman Rosenthal, "We've been pushing HR 42, in one form or another, for seven years. It calls for eight steps of labeling, the most important being full disclosure of ingredients, which is important because there's a basic consumer's right to know what the hell he's eating, because there's a very real health consideration. Something like 80 million Americans have some kind of allergy related to food."

Where does the legislation stand now? "A similar bill went through the Senate last year, but it died in the House. HR 42, meanwhile, is basically in the same place it was in 1971—pending before the same House subcommittee," says Bloomfield.

"And even if HR 42 is enacted, I don't look for revolutionary changes," he says. "One year later, we're not going to have a healthier population, but in the long run it'll help."

Nutritionists believe that while tougher labeling might dethrone King Vitaman (a cereal that's 58 percent sugar) and a couple of its cohorts, chances are that America's sweet tooth will prevail to the bitter end.

There may be no biological need for refined sugar. The substance may be linked to tooth decay, obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Yet, as the old saying goes, you can lead a person to sugarless food, but you can't make him think. ●

THE SACKING OF SACCHARIN

By Robert Shrum

Warning: The Canadians have determined that saccharin is dangerous to your rats' health.
saccharin
One tablet is two teaspoons of sugar in sweetness
1000 tablets
Keep tightly closed
SOLUBLE, EFFERVESCENT

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES JOERN

When the FDA's recently announced saccharin ban triggered an outcry unequaled since Nixon's Saturday Night Massacre, Congress responded in its customary dynamo fashion: it held some hearings. The hastily called hearings focused almost exclusively on the alleged evils and merits of the sweetener itself. That may have made angry diabetics and Weight Watchers feel better, but as usual Congress did nothing to address the larger and far more critical problem: Why are America's food and drug industries so weakly and haphazardly regulated? In the end, the answer to that question comes back to Congress itself, which long has encouraged industry's dominance of the very agencies that are meant to regulate it. The saccharin ban is, ironically, a case in point.

The blistering reaction among consumers to the government ban on a highly popular food product was not half so surprising as were the immediate attempts of FDA officials to undercut their own ruling. Acting Commissioner Sherwin Gardner told the House hearings: "We have no evidence that individuals exposed to saccharin for long periods are more likely to get cancer than individuals who are not exposed." But, he continued, the FDA had to ban the sweetener because of the Delaney clause of the Food and Drug Act.

And therein lies the true story of the great saccharin imbroglio. For there is persuasive evidence that the FDA applied the Delaney clause in the saccharin case, where a ban was bound to set off a backlash, in order to generate support for gutting the very law the agency is supposed to enforce.

Far from demonstrating its watchful concern for consumers' well-being, the FDA's saccharin ban provides fresh evidence of its cozy bias toward the very industries it is meant to regulate

Enacted in 1958, the Delaney provision says that if the ingestion of a food additive, in any quantity, causes cancer in animals or in human beings, then it must be prohibited. Period. Previously, the FDA had (and still has) a more general authority to ban dangerous substances in food. Indeed, Commissioner Gardner said during the hearings that saccharin "might" have been banned regardless of Delaney. But the broader general authority imposes on FDA the burden of proving the danger, and industry has the right to refute the proof with other tests and data. Delaney removed all such complications: any cancer in animals—in "appropriate tests"—was enough.

Yet Delaney is not as absolute as it seems. The FDA had in its files tests that could have justified a saccharin prohibition long ago. In 1972, the agency had removed saccharin from the GRAS (Generally Regarded as Safe) list of additives and reassigned it to an interim list supposedly under study. But the ban itself struck without warning. Nancy Steorts, assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture for consumer affairs in the Ford Administration, reports that saccharin "was hardly ever mentioned" in the meetings between department and FDA officials to review possible food regulations. A new Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Carol Foreman, who is in

charge of consumer issues, knows of no FDA forewarning to the department.

But one person was ready to move as soon as the saccharin ban was announced. Congressman James Martin had decided when he came to Congress in 1973 that "at some point I would challenge Delaney." On Friday, March 11, two days after the ban, he began a series of meetings with FDA officials, including Acting Commissioner Sherwin Gardner, chief counsel Richard Merrill, and congressional liaison officer Robert Wetherell. They told him, he recalls, that they "did not really believe on the evidence available that saccharin was harmful in normal use." He replied that he wanted to try amending Delaney. Gardner and Merrill said they could not advocate such a change openly, but they agreed to help him. And they did: Merrill, the legal counsel of the FDA, was one of the draftsmen of the Martin proposal. He and Gardner thought "the only option was the kind of bill I have," Congressman Martin explains.

The kind of bill he has, with an FDA assist, would blast cavernous loopholes in the Delaney clause. It calls for much more than balancing possible carcinogenicity against other health considerations, such as the needs of diabetics or dieters; the Martin bill also would allow the FDA to outweigh the cancer risks of a given additive with its "nutritional value, cost, availability and acceptability of foods and . . . the interests of the general public"—a catch-all exception that could reduce the Delaney rule to a meaningless formality. Martin insists that though he is "generally pro-business," he wanted "to stay away from a pro-business bill." But Ira Summers of the National Canners Association notes Martin's bill is "exactly the approach we would take." Summers especially welcomes the cost provisions. "Economics ought to be considered in balancing any danger," he says. What the provision means, a congressional expert warns, is that a "little carcinogenicity might be OK, as long as it holds down the price of the product."

The food industry has hated the Delaney clause from the start—and the FDA notoriously reflects industry attitudes. An FDA source reports that "top agency officials share the corporate view of Delaney." And that attitude does much to explain the agency's otherwise bizarre conduct in the saccharin case: the FDA did little to help the public understand the ban; for instance, it did not explain the relevance of the Canadian animal studies or the reasons for high dosages of saccharin used in those studies. Before the Carter Administration could take control of the agency, a lame-duck acting commissioner moved suddenly in a doubtful situation affecting tens of millions of consumers; then he undercut the agency's own credibility by testifying that saccharin might not increase the likelihood of cancer at all—but that the nitpicking Delaney clause forced the ban.

"We never had a chance of getting rid of Delaney before," an industry lobbyist says. "People were too scared of cancer to tamper with it even a little. Now there's an emotional push on the other side." A congressional health expert adds: "Nobody groaned except the manufacturers when an emulsifier or some such was ruled out. The public didn't even know about it. The saccharin ban is industry's golden opportunity." He thinks that purists, such as Ralph Nader's Health Research Group, are playing into industry hands: "By defending the ban so hard, they're not giving the public a reasonable choice."

Indiana Congressman Andrew Jacobs argues that there should be a moratorium on the saccharin decision while HEW and Congress carefully assess the Delaney rule to develop more consistent and credible guidelines. But a House Health Subcommittee aide doubts the chances of such a moratorium: "The members don't want to legislate an exception for just one substance." Thus, all the factors are fusing to promote a quick general revision of Delaney, one that is likely to debase the safety of food additives.

More than half of the 2,500 food additives now on the market never have been tested

For industry, it looks like a no-lose proposition. Even if the saccharin ban holds and Delaney stays on the books, this is a convenient time to take the gamble. The FDA has scheduled a prehearing on cyclamates this month. A final decision should come before year's end. "It's a nice coincidence," says former Agriculture consumer adviser Steorts. Abbott Laboratories, the manufacturer of cyclamates, has submitted new animal studies. The National Cancer Institute has reported that the evidence does not indicate that cyclamates either are or are not a cause of cancer. So far, FDA publicly has opposed reapproving cyclamates. "It's hard for them to admit they were wrong," says the National Canners' Ira Summers.

Ironically, the Canadians to this day allow cyclamates as an over-the-counter drug; so do the western Europeans. And in the irony of all the saccharin ironies, an FDA source says that the rats in the original cyclamate test may have been fed saccharin as well—which was dismissed as a factor at the time because it was then on the GRAS list.

Whatever the fate of cyclamates, soda-pop bottlers have indicated that they will find some artificial sweetener for their beverages. In announcing the saccharin ban, Commissioner Gardner expressed "absolute confidence in the initiative and imagination of American industry. . . . I predict that the inconvenience will be temporary." What it will be, charges a congressional health staffer, is "another case of eat and drink now, test later. We could end up replacing saccharin, which some human data show to be maybe safe, with another substance, for which we have only one rat test and won't have human data for years."

The FDA's philosophy of consume now and test later is a pervasive one. Whether or not thousands of additives, emulsifiers, homogenizers and artificial flavors are really safe, nobody knows. And few in industry or government seem intent on finding out; more than half of the 2,500 food additives now on the market have never been tested. Neither have 1,200 artificial flavors and colors. The GRAS list itself is a bureaucratic euphemism: "generally regarded as safe" does not mean that the substances on the list are in fact safe, but that they are widely used and the FDA is unsure that they are unsafe.

One expert estimates that it would cost approximately an extra billion dollars a year for the FDA to begin testing comprehensively—not a bad investment considering that the agency has jurisdiction over 100,000 companies doing $150 billion of annual business involving the nation's entire food supply. But short of such resources, the FDA continues to consign most of its testing to the very industry whose products are being checked. One Illinois lab is under investigation for falsifying data. A lab customer has charged that the test documents, if read carefully, show that "some animals died more than once, and others disappeared and reappeared." Aspartame, a proposed artificial sweetener, is currently in limbo due to the possibility of counterfeit tests.

The strapped FDA lacks even the funds to carry out scheduled inspec-

tions. The Bon Vivant soup plant that produced the killer vichyssoise with botulism in 1971 had not been inspected in four years.

One reason the FDA lacks money, claims an agency alumnus, is that "this is an area where it's easy for the Office of Management and Budget to hold spending down." But it is doubtful that money alone would make the difference. Since 1962, the agency's budget has risen tenfold to $240 million and its staff has tripled to 7,300. "It's still not enough," argues a congressional aide, "but more won't make the agency better as long as it's in bed with industry." During the Nixon years, the director of the agency's food bureau was Virgil Wodicka, a Wesson oil executive who has since returned to the food industry. University of Iowa chemist Gerald Solomons, a consultant to FDA in 1974, testified before a Senate committee that employees were punished for negative findings about new drugs.

Yet, in the end, the agency itself is a symptom more than a cause. Despite the efforts of reformers like Ted Kennedy, Congress continues to favor and reinforce the pro-industry bias of food-safety regulation. Meat is not even under FDA jurisdiction, but under the meat and poultry division of the Agriculture Department, where producers have maximum influence. Former department staffer Nancy Steorts remembers a series of departmental meetings to discuss sodium nitrites, one of the most potent carcinogens and a common additive in bacon and hot dogs. "Each meeting," she says, "just resulted in further study, further meetings. They wouldn't even go for a warning label."

Seventy-one years ago, Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle*, an investigative novel that led to the passage of the first Pure Food Law. Today, says a congressional expert on the FDA, our food is less safe than it was then. "Each of us has so many foreign chemicals in the body," he says, "that if the British were cannibals, they couldn't eat our flesh under their safety laws." And if the FDA's saccharin ploy succeeds in permanently undermining the Delaney rule, we may multiply the poisons in our bodies. In 1977, an Upton Sinclair would have to look beyond the stockyards to the labyrinth of a federal agency that embraces the industry it is meant to regulate. The new jungle flourishes there. "We're failing to do our job with thousands of ingredients," concludes a House health subcommittee attorney, Dack Dalrymple. "I would put saccharin at the bottom of the list of priorities."●

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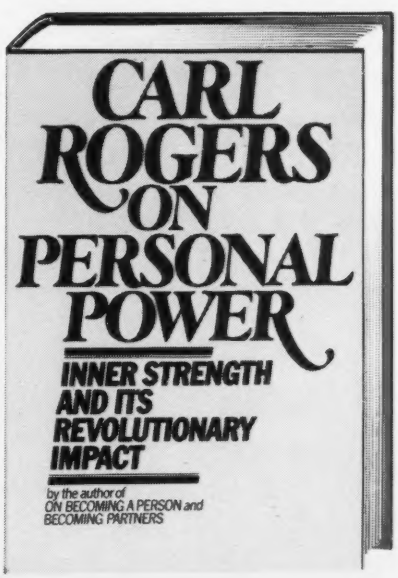
CARL ROGERS ON PERSONAL POWER
INNER STRENGTH AND ITS REVOLUTIONARY IMPACT
by the author of ON BECOMING A PERSON and BECOMING PARTNERS

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Anita Bryant took one look at Miami's gay rights ordinance and decided the time had come to drive homosexuals out of the sunshine and back into the closets **By Frank Rose**

Trouble in paradise

Dick Shack is a theatrical agent in Miami, and he's in a bind. First there's Ruth Shack, human rights advocate, Miami Metro Commissioner and sponsor of the Dade County gay rights ordinance. Ruth is his wife. Then there's Anita Bryant, born-again Christian, songstress for Florida orange juice and leader of the crusade against those who would overturn God's moral code. Anita is his client. Dick is caught in the middle.

Larry King, who is in a position to know, says Dick isn't the only one. King is a talk show host on Miami radio station WIOD, and he says the gay rights debate has been threatening all kinds of relationships lately. "I've been doing radio for 20 years," he says, "and I've never seen the public like it is on this subject. If I did five hours on this every night I'd still have the phones ringing every second. It's polarizing the city."

What is gay rights and why is it polarizing Miami? No one really knows, except that somehow it involves orange juice, the Book of Leviticus, a $400,000 election, a minority that has to argue

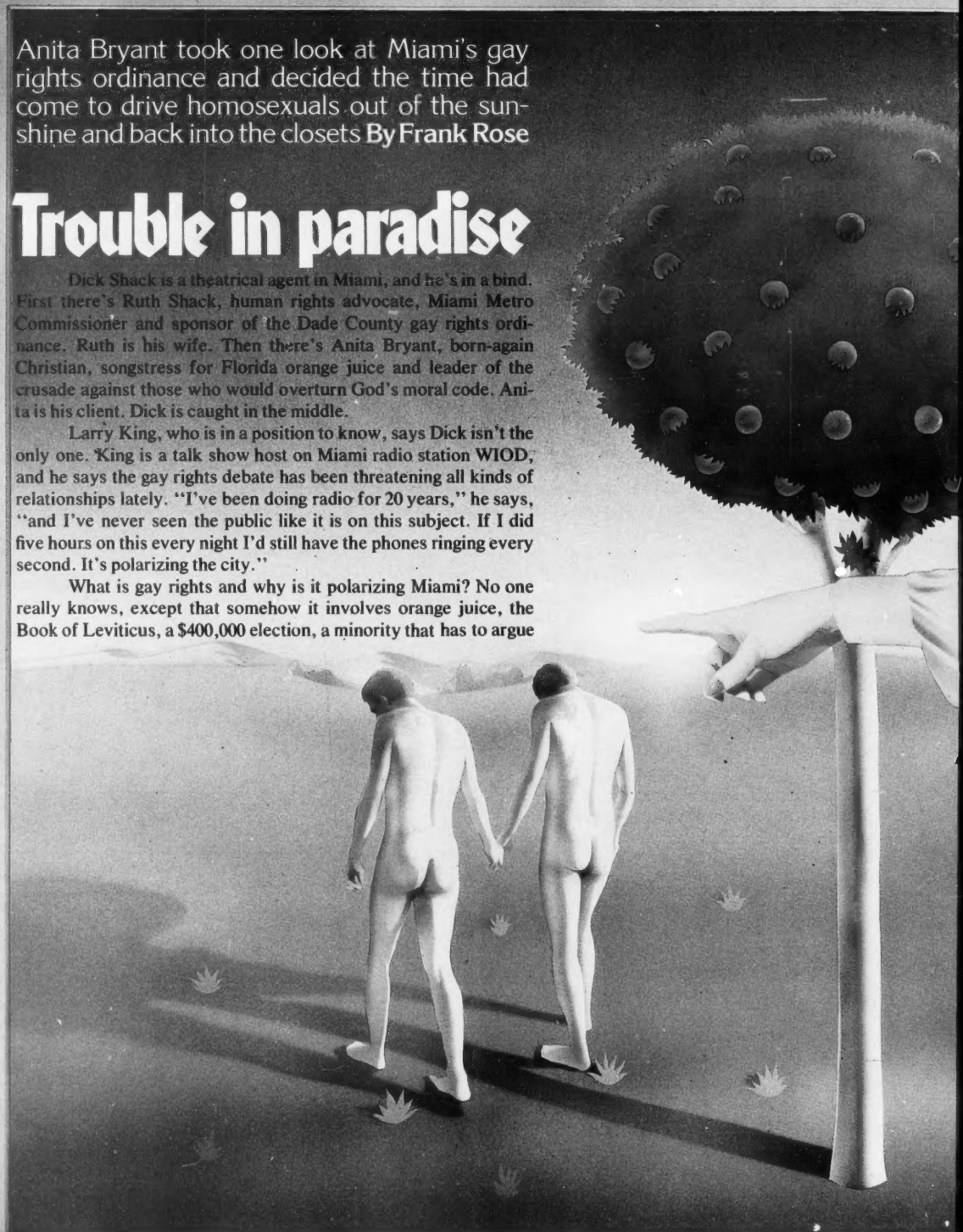

ILLUSTRATION BY DICKRAN PALULIAN

about its "legitimacy," and thousands of schoolchildren who are the objects of alleged "recruitment" attempts by homosexuals who cannot have children of their own. Those in favor of gay rights see the fight as an extension of the civil rights struggle of the sixties. Their opponents see it as a chance—maybe even the last chance—to stem the ebbing tide of morality. And neither side shows any sign of backing off.

On June 7, Metropolitan Dade County—an area that stretches from Miami Beach to the Everglades—is scheduled to hold a referendum on whether to repeal a civil rights ordinance for homosexuals. It will be the third municipality in the country to take a vote like that, and if the repeal goes through it will be the second in the country to take gay rights away. The ordinance in question, passed by the Metro Commission in January, is actually an amendment of the already existing civil rights ordinance to cover "affectional or sexual preferences." Its future is uncertain because Anita Bryant has decided to lead a mothers' crusade against those who would, in the Old Testament sense, commit an abomination.

Although many people consider the notion of applying Old Testament morality to a place like Miami quite curious, they won't all vote for gay rights. Larry King, who supports the ordinance, thinks it will be defeated by a 60–40 vote, maybe 55–45, depending on who comes to the polls. He also predicts the highest turnout Miami has ever had in a nonpresidential election. Neither side agrees with him on that—everybody needs the specter of apathy as a campaign tool, after all—but each side does predict victory. Right now, however, the antigays are doing so with more confidence than the pros. Bob Kunst, the most vocal gay leader, can still boast that Anita Bryant has brought more attention to the issue than he could have hoped for. But elsewhere, particularly in the schools, gays and their supporters are beginning to fear that she's generating more heat than they can bear.

The fight over Miami's gay rights ordinance hasn't produced many facts, but it has proved one point: when gays come out of the closet in south Florida, fundamentalists come out of the woodwork. Miami is a town of multiple identities. It's the sun 'n' surf capital of the Bible Belt, but it's also a rapidly growing hodgepodge, like southern California in a hothouse, like Los Angeles sprayed thinly over an ill-cleared swamp. Cubans and New York Jews on the retirement plan are the ethnic groups that put it on the map; transplanted midwestern professionals set the cultural tone; truck-driving farmboys from Alabama dominate the interior, from Homestead to Hialeah. Most of the good ol' boys have Bible-totin' wives. Their religion, steaming in Florida's heady mixture of sunshine and swamp gas after 200 years of slow fermentation in the backwoods South, gets kid-glove treatment at all times. Only rarely does it get its back up—but on the unfortunate occasions when it does, the myth of Miami as an international center of suburban double-knit sophistication is inarguably blown.

Anita Bryant may be a dim memory elsewhere in the country, but in Miami she's a Christian guru. Her secret is the way she has linked herself inextricably with two of Florida's most treasured symbols: sunshine and orange juice. Every Easter there are newspaper articles about the sunrise services she sings at; every New Year's there's coverage of her efforts on behalf of the Orange Bowl. Her records have been sold in supermarkets with bags of oranges; her books get favorable reviews in the local papers. Interestingly enough, her publisher, a small religious outfit in New Jersey, also publishes another celebrated Miami writer—Marabel Morgan, author of *The Total Woman*.

Anita Bryant was born again when she was eight years old. Eleven years later, she went to Atlantic City as Miss Oklahoma and became second runner-up in the Miss America pageant (talent competition song: "When the Boys Talk About the Girls"). She signed a recording contract, announced that she wanted to get married and have six children, and wed Bob Green, a Miami disc jockey she'd met at a deejay's convention in the First Baptist Church of Tulsa. They have four children.

Green, who was 25, had been mentioned as a possible replacement for Dick Clark on *American Bandstand* if the payola scandal got too hot for Clark. Instead he became Anita's personal manager. The Christmas after their wedding, she joined the Bob Hope tour on its visit to Guantanamo Naval Base; after that, Hope went mostly to Vietnam, and she went with him. She refused nightclub work, appearing instead on *The Lawrence Welk Show*, in Tupperware commercials and in such venues as the Bibletown Auditorium in Boca Raton, Florida. In 1968 she sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" at the White House. In 1969, after a local Doors concert made legendary by Jim Morrison's unscheduled genital exposure, she appeared onstage with Congressman Claude Pepper at Miami's Youth for Decency rally. Last month she sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" again—at the antigay fundraiser she combined with her birthday party. Ronald Reagan took the opportunity to present her with an enormous bag of oranges.

Those who know Anita personally say she is quite sincere about her religion. Sometimes, they add, she becomes too sincere. Certainly she has a flair for the dramatic: phrases like "flaunt their perversion" and "deviate lifestyle" and "sick segment of society" tumble from her lips like bitter kisses from the Lord. But in Miami, the only thing unusual about her is her celebrity. Lots of people share her beliefs.

Take Judy Wilson—30-some years old, mother of two, a mechanic's wife. Mrs. Wilson is a member of Anita Bryant's church, and she speaks in the same high-pitched sing-song that made Martha Shumway such a resonant character. "Everything's either right or wrong," she declares anxiously. "There have to be some standards. It can't just be helter-skelter."

Mrs. Wilson is one of several members of the Northwest Baptist Church who do the day-to-day work on Anita Bryant's repeal campaign. Most of her knowledge of homosexualty comes from a book called *Straight: A Heterosexual Talks About His Homosexual Past*. Its author, she says, lived a tortured life—"not because he was hurt by society, but because of the people he was with." She does not consider herself a bigot when it comes to homosexuals. "Heaven knows, I wouldn't want to deny anyone their human rights," she says, "but I'm not denying their right to be human. . . . If someone says, 'I don't like the way you're living, I don't want you as an example for my kids,' how can that be bigotry?"

It was sentiments like those that got Anita Bryant in trouble March 8 on ABC's *Good Morning, America*. It was not a good morning for her, frankly. She got rattled, and then when she started talking about God's word they cut her off for a station break. Worse yet, when the show returned she was nowhere to be seen; in her place was Gore Vidal, who'd come to speak on the first 48 days of Jimmy Carter's presidency and instead was telling viewers that the last time he'd heard anyone espousing Anita Bryant's

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Frank Rose is a New York free-lance writer whose work has appeared in Rolling Stone *and the* Village Voice.

MIAMI HERALD

WIDE WORLD

Cultural clash: To Anita Bryant and friends, homosexuality is "an abomination." But to gay activist Bob Kunst, "Life is like ice cream—there's 38 flavors out there, you choose the flavor you want"

philosophy it was the Nazis talking about the Jews.

I call Bob Green at Fishers of Men, the Christian talent agency he operates, to request an Anita Bryant interview. Green's secretary gives me the number of Miss Bryant's new press agent, a man who served as a consultant during the last few weeks of Spiro Agnew's gubernatorial campaign. He tells me about Miss Bryant's busy schedule and how careful she has to be now that "Gore Vidal made an utter fool of her." He asks if *New Times* isn't a left-wing publication, suggests I do an interview for *National Enquirer* instead, says they pay good money.

Jack Campbell keeps a peanut on his end table. Not an ordinary peanut, but a big, giant, presidential peanut that looks significant, sitting there across

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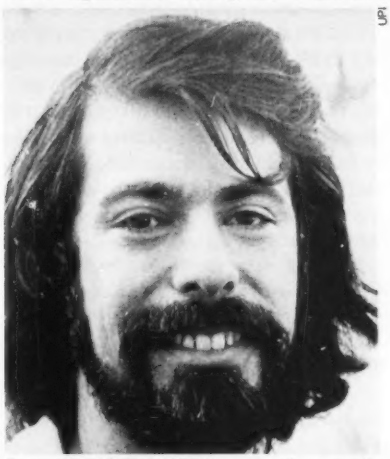


from the official 1977 Inaugural souvenir book. Campbell, 44, is a successful Miami businessman, but different: his constant companion is a beach boy whose eyebrows are lighter than his tan. Campbell's main business is the Club Baths, a chain of 40 gay bathhouses across the U.S. and Canada, which he started in Cleveland 12 years ago. He also has an optical business and a gay disco in Cleveland, an apartment building in Fort Lauderdale, and two restaurants in Miami. He moved to Miami four years ago, for the climate.

Campbell didn't start out to be a businessman; he wanted to be a politician, but switched his major when he realized he wasn't going to turn straight. "I thought I'd better get into something where you don't live in a fishbowl," he says. Since 1969, however, he's been active in the gay rights movement. Right now he's a board member of the Gay Rights National Lobby—they're lobbying Congress for passage of a gay rights bill similar to Miami's—and cochairperson of the Dade County Coalition for the

Humanistic Rights of Gays. The coalition was formed last summer in his living room by leaders from such gay organizations as the Metropolitan Community Church, the Thebans Motorcycle Club, the Lesbian Task Force of the National Organization of Women and the Transperience Center. They all came at the urging of Bob Basker, a gray-haired Leftie who wanted to discuss ways of establishing a gay political presence in Miami.

Miami is a pretty gay town—it has gay bars, restaurants, clubs, baths and even hotels, all of which function openly, if discreetly—but it's never been a hotbed of gay activism. Someone tried to start a homophile organization in the mid-sixties, but he was afraid to admit he was homosexual. He also didn't attract any other members. No matter; he was hounded out of town anyway and sent to jail on a sex charge in Orlando. Basker helped start a Gay Activists Alliance in 1971, but it disintegrated after overturning a Miami Beach ordinance banning cross-dressing. Busts a couple of years later at Campbell's Club Miami and at a gay strip on Miami Beach were effectively countered with court action. With further harassment thus ruled out, Miami gays seemed free to indulge themselves with impunity.

The new coalition, meeting in Campbell's living room, decided to test that freedom. They sent a questionnaire to every 1976 primary candidate in Dade County, soliciting each one's views on such questions as the Equal Rights Amendment, gay child-custody cases and a gay rights law, and endorsed those who supported their positions. When the election was over, they were minus four opponents—three state legislators and one Metro commissioner. "Much to our surprise," adds Campbell, "and probably to everyone else's too."

The new commissioner was Ruth Shack, who coincidentally had received a $1,000 campaign contribution from Anita Bryant. Shortly after her election, Shack wrote a note thanking the coalition and crediting her victory to its support. When the coalition started lobbying the Metro Commission for a gay rights ordinance, she agreed to introduce it. The bill passed its initial vote December 7 with no opposition.

Meanwhile, homosexuality was making headlines in Fort Lauderdale, just to the north. The situation was curious. In late November, Mayor E. Clay Shaw, discussing a beach report with his city manager, called for a grand jury investigation of male prostitution on the beach. He linked the hustlers with the beach's two gay hotels and worried out loud about the city's reputation as a family vacation spot. Then he took his own vacation in Colorado. By the time he returned, the city manager and the police chief had announced that there was no basis for grand jury action, gay demonstrators were demanding that he either apologize or resign and the local newspapers were accusing him of publicizing the city as "a haven for homosexuals."

Shaw took the hint, but it was too late. Bob Kunst, cochairperson of the Broward County Coalition (also cochairperson of the Dade County Coalition), announced that there would be a gay candidate for mayor in the March elections. The candidate turned out to be 45-year-old Roger Luckett, a real estate operator who claims to have built a third of Fort Lauderdale since he moved down from Detroit in 1959. Luckett probably didn't stand a chance for mayor, but, thanks to a city charter that turns municipal elections into a free-for-all, he was still a good bet to end up as a city commissioner. It was lucky, then, that

Anita expounded the vampire theory of homosexuality: "As a mother, I know that homosexuals, biologically, cannot reproduce children; therefore, they must recruit our children"

the city fathers discovered a technicality sufficient to keep him off the ballot.

Just as Luckett launched the first of a series of fruitless court challenges, the Miami gay rights ordinance came under withering fire. Archconservative talk-show hostess Shirley Spellerberg accused Broward/Dade cochairperson Kunst of experimenting with group sex; Anita Bryant emerged from Villa Verde, her 29-room mansion in Miami Beach, to announce that no one was going to take away her rights as a mother; and on January 18, the day the Metro Commission was to take its final vote, coalition forces arriving at the courthouse at 7:30 a.m. found it awash with fundamentalists carrying signs: GOD SAYS NO. WHO ARE YOU TO SAY DIFFERENT?

"It was like watching the Scopes Monkey Trial," *Miami Herald* columnist Charles Whited wrote the next day. Born-again baseball coach Alvin Dark called homosexuality "an abomination to the Lord." Anita Bryant declared that she was "not only aflame, but on fire." Coral Gables city commissioner Robert Brake took the high road. "Homosexuals are perfectly free to go into their closets," he said, "in their bedrooms, in their privacy, and take care of themselves there." The ordinance passed, five to three, with one commissioner absent due to a "bad cold." Neal Adams, the newly elected black commissioner who'd vowed support, voted against it. Bill Oliver, a blue-collar, middle-aged, born-again Christian, voted for it. Robert Brake got up at the end and organized the petition drive that would force the commission to put the issue to a countywide vote.

What was born on the floor of the courthouse that morning amounted to an ecumenical movement. Catholic layman Bob Brake met Southern Baptist Anita Bryant; Anita Bryant met Orthodox Rabbi Phineas A. Weberman; together they formed an organization called Save Our Children, Inc. SOC's first blow was below the belt. At a press conference announcing the petition drive, Bryant, flanked by clergymen, held up a gay coalition flyer she claimed was being distributed to Coral Gables high school students. "The homosexual recruiters of Dade County have already begun their campaign," she declared.

Thus was unfurled the principal argument of the anti-gay-rights faction: a vampire theory of homosexuality. Anita expounded it as well as anybody: "As a mother, I know that homosexuals, biologically, cannot reproduce children; therefore, they must recruit our children." The precise nature of the recruitment process is never explained, but words like "conversion" are commonly substituted. Most Baptists seem to view it as a sort of *Rosemary's Baby*-way of being born again, with a plunge into the bus terminal toilet replacing the more traditional baptism.

The recruitment charge proved to be merely a warm-up, however; Anita's real triumph came when, in a stroke of Nixonian genius, she discovered that she herself was being discriminated against. It was the end of February, about a week before the end of the petition drive, and she immediately called a press conference. She produced a telegram and announced, "I have just been notified that the blacklisting of Anita Bryant has begun." The telegram was from a New York TV producer, canceling her contract to host a daytime TV sewing show for the Singer Company because of intense publicity about her "controversial political activities." Thus, she declared, her lifelong dream of having a whole-

some TV series of her own was shattered. "I'm frightened," she told one sympathetic newspaper commentator. "They're destroying my career." Singer offered to let her keep the $1,300 sewing machine they'd sent, but she vowed to return it.

Then came word of a nationwide orange juice boycott—apparently a spontaneous move by gays across the country—and reports that First Federal Savings and Loan, which also used her in its ad campaign, had canceled a March 8 production date. First Federal, however, explained that its deposits were so high it didn't need to advertise, and before long the Singer Company relented and gave Anita back her sewing show. But by then gay rights advocates had already been forced to go on television, denouncing the orange juice boycott and denyin that they were denying Anita Bryant her right to work. For the second time in less than a month, she had seized the advantage by skewing the issue.

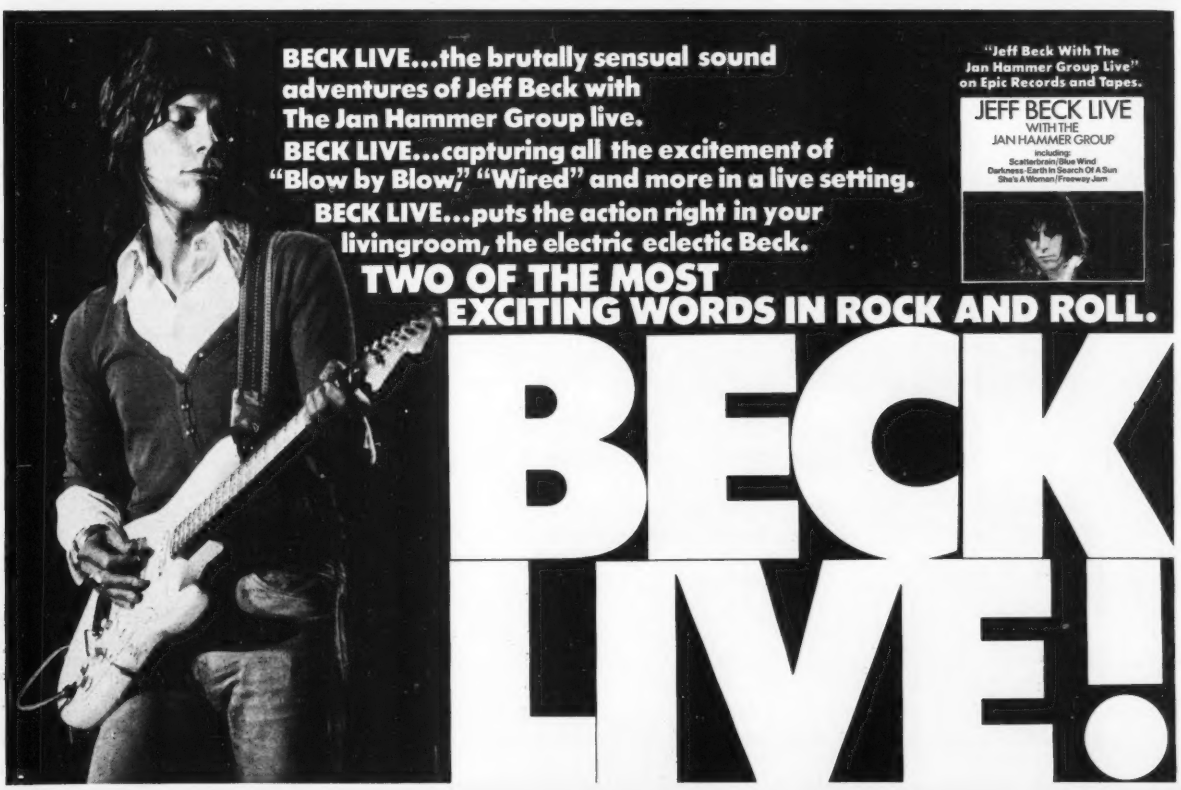
Save Our Children, Inc., turned in its petitions in early March. Thanks to an aroused populace and a successful "petition sabbath" in local churches and synagogues, they had 64,304 signatures, which were 54,304 more than the law required. On March 15, the Metro Commission voted six to three to hold a referendum June 7, at an estimated cost of $400,000, to decide the matter. (By law, the commission's only alternative was outright repeal.) Two days later, the *Miami Herald*—which, unlike the *News*, had supported the ordinance—backed away in an editorial headlined "Gay Rights Is Not a $400,000 Issue." The same edition carried an article announcing that a longtime ERA supporter in the Florida Senate (where the ERA faces a crucial test this spring) was switching his vote because of the gay rights issue. He cited the prospect of homosexual marriages and unisex bathrooms in his statement.

In the living room where it all began, Jack Campbell laments the unexpected uproar the ordinance has caused. He had hoped to spend February and March prepping for the legislative session in Tallahassee, which opened on April Fool's Day. Instead, he and Bob Basker are trying to put together $400,000 to underwrite the referendum so Save Our Children can't decry the waste of "limited city funds." They're putting together newspaper ads to counter the full-page appeal to "the normal majority" that Bryant and Brake ran in the *Miami Herald*. The Save Our Children ad called for the defeat of the "dangerous homosexual recruitment ordinance" and depicted homosexuality as something that has been met through the ages "with disdain, abhorrence, disgust—even death."

But at least, says Campbell, Anita has unified the gay community. "I don't think this amendment amounts to a hill of beans," he confides. "But I think this may focus in on how much basic discrimination homosexuals face."

The rumor at poolside this morning at the Marlin Beach Hotel is that it's snowing in New York. The Marlin Beach is one of Fort Lauderdale's two gay beachfront hotels, and it is packed. It's especially packed at poolside, where row after row of prostrate male bodies clad in bulging bikinis lie sizzling in the sun.

If you squint your eyes, individual skin tones can be distinguished: the polished bronze of the professional, the glowing pink of the inexperienced, the chalklike pallor of the uninitiated. Over on the far side, a *Playgirl* centerfold is being passed from chaise to chaise. Nearby, a 28-year-old New York restaurant owner named Tom is telling a friend of 15 minutes how not everyone here is from New York. "I met Philadelphia yesterday afternoon, and Boston and Chicago, and last night I slept with Cleveland." His friend motions toward a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silhouette on the diving board. "I slept with that one last night." Splash.

"This place is a fuck factory," says Carl, an 18-year-old from Fort Lauderdale who quickly disappears into Tom's room. Looking around, it's hard to disagree; most people seem to be in either postcoital bliss or precoital arousal. The Marlin Beach is a resort within a resort. The beach outside may be aswarm with college students, but the focus here is on the action at poolside, where bodies pair off and quit the sun for an hour or so of air-conditioned sex, then return and pair off again. Carl is right; the atmosphere is torrid. But it's also relaxed, in an odd sort of way. People come to the Marlin Beach to unwind; the sex is not so much an end in itself as a means of further relaxation.

"You have to be sort of liberal and broadminded," says Bill Hovan, sitting in the bar by the beach, "but there's nothing obscene around here." Bill Hovan owns the place, and the main thing he doesn't like about it is the disco music that's pumped continuously from every speaker. He prefers the little piano bar near the pool—every gay establishment in south Florida seems to have a piano bar where a Richard Carpenter lookalike plays "The Girl from Ipanema" with one hand—but this is the late afternoon tea dance and the piano bar has long since been given over to the disco hordes. There's not that much difference between disco and easy listening anyway, but Hovan doesn't understand. He seems too overwhelmed by the mechanical insistency of the beat to understand the crucial distinction between Patti Page and Donna Summer—that Patti Page sang to people who thought Vaseline was for rough hands.

Hovan, a grandfather at 49, has owned the Marlin Beach for 11 years. Three years ago, when the recession had not yet bottomed out, he decided to take a gamble. He advertised in gay magazines, made contacts at gay travel agencies and turned the Marlin Beach into a gay hotel. It's worked; in fact, it's worked so well that this winter Don Embinder, who publishes a slickly pretentious gay magazine called *Blueboy* in Miami, bought the hotel next door. (Embinder's operation does not seem too successful, however; while Hovan's place throbs far into the night, its neighbor sits half-empty and silent.) And, until Mayor Shaw's statement of last November, it was working without incident.

Gays in Fort Lauderdale were not so much frightened by Mayor Shaw's position as they were stunned, and then angry. They had, after all, been operating freely—if not always living openly—for years. Now it looked as if they had mistaken blindness for tolerance, and they weren't happy. As Hovan puts it, "This is a sophisticated area with about 3 million population. Why shouldn't we be able to enjoy a sophisticated lifestyle?"

Well, it looks as if they will, for the moment at least. When I call Shaw, an aide tells me the mayor doesn't think an interview will serve much of a purpose from his standpoint. When I call Roger Luckett, who nows owns the only outfront gay real estate operation in the country, he says, "The only way to stop us is to put a bullet through us—which they've tried already."

Nobody actually tried to put a bullet through Roger Luckett during his campaign for mayor, but one guy did come prepared in case he got the urge. That was the time Luckett and his bodyguard—he'd hired a bodyguard after the threatening phone calls—went to a local radio station for a talk show date. There were two guys outside waiting for them—one packing a gun. To hear Luckett tell it, they barely got in the door. "I've paid one hell of a price," Luckett says, and he's right: his mother, father, brother and sister all sent letters telling him to take hormone shots to get his manhood back; he lost 95 percent of his straight business; he spent $2,200 of his own money for campaign costs and legal fees. He thinks the gay community has let him down—especially in terms of financial support—but he doesn't really care. "I'm not going to give up just because everybody else did," he says.

Coral Gables is a conservative and affluent suburb that likes to be known as City Beautiful. The way to judge Miami neighborhoods is by their vegetation—poor neighborhoods fry bare-assed in the sun, richer ones wrap themselves in subtropical foliage—and Coral Gables has some of the most luxurious vegetation in Dade County. Robert Brake has been a Coral Gables commissioner since 1971; before that he was a state legislator for two years and a Metro commissioner for three. During the sixties he took a libel suit against the *Miami Herald* all the way to the Supreme Court, charging that two editorials and a cartoon had cost him his job as Metro commissioner. Before he discovered the homosexual threat, Brake devoted himself to the Miami right-to-life movement. This month he's running for mayor in City Beautiful.

When you mention Robert Brake to most people, they tell you about the time he tried to keep *Woodstock* out of Coral Gables movie theaters. Brake, however, tries to paint himself as a friendly neighborhood liberal. Sitting in his law office on Ponce de Leon Boulevard, with a wall full of law books anchoring his devilish Irish twinkle, he looks like Jonathan Winters on the verge of a Maude Frickert routine.

"The only real question is the margin of our victory," he declares with a smile. The commission has just this morning voted for the referendum; Brake considers its failure to repeal the ordinance immediately a serious tactical error. "I strongly suspect," he warns, "that at the end of the summer, five and perhaps six commissioners will face recall petitions."

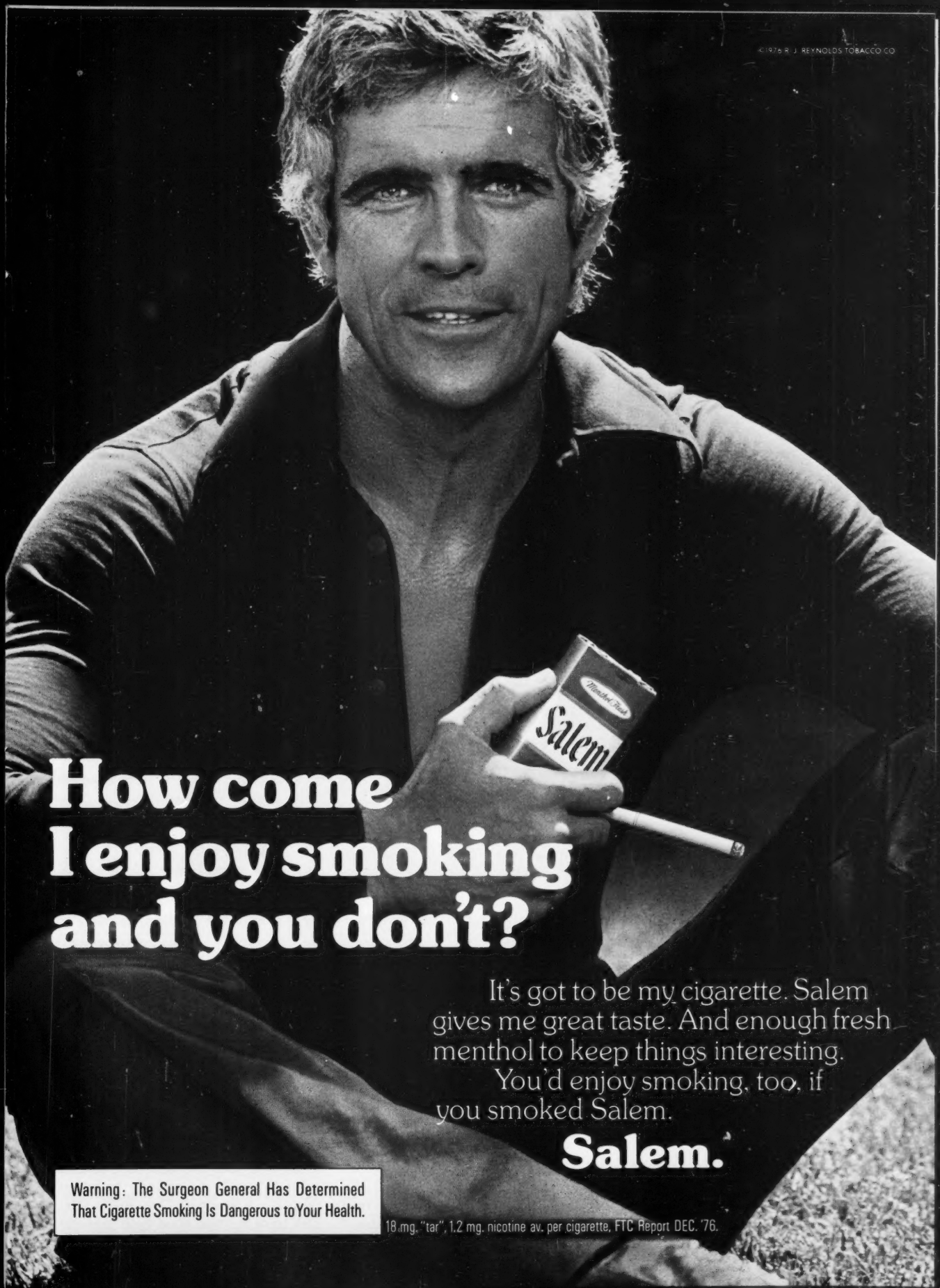
Brake says he would like homosexuals to go back to their closets if they can't control their behavior. "There's nothing about living a public life and a private life that's in any way unusual," he says. "All of us have private sexual lives, and we don't go around bragging about them." Like other gay rights opponents, he views homosexuality as learned behavior. Because he does so, he gets upset when gay activists talk about the need for homosexual role models. If there is anything Brake's world doesn't need, it's homosexual role models.

"As long as they don't publicly flaunt their homosexuality," he says, "they've got the same rights everybody else has. They are not a legitimate minority group. A black man cannot change his skin color, but a homosexual can change his sexuality, or at least hide it. I don't go around publicly proclaiming my sexuality—whatever it is—and most people I know don't.

"The norm throughout the ages has been the man-woman relationship," he states. "This seems to be the only generation that has to decide to reinvent the wheel on moral questions."

Bob Kunst does look like the kind of person who would try to reinvent the wheel. Kunst works out of the Transperience Center, a two-room outfit in Coconut Grove, Miami's bleached-out response to Greenwich Village. The front room is your basic Movement office; the back room has pillows on the floor. On the door between them is a newspaper photo of Mary Hartman and a hand-lettered sign that reads, "You are entering the STET abandonment room."

The STET abandonment room is where Kunst and his partner, Alan Rockway, Ph.D., have perfected the direct love transperience. It's a *trans*perience,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Salem
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It's got to be my cigarette. Salem gives me great taste. And enough fresh menthol to keep things interesting.
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not an *experience*, Rockway explains, because it involves three people instead of one or two. What it does with those three people is it has them all touch each other, two men and a woman or vice versa; one of them lies down and the others stand up and touch and usually none of them has any clothes on. This teaches the person lying down that it doesn't matter whether he or she is being touched by a he or a she.

The idea behind Transperience—and, as far as Kunst is concerned, the gay rights movement itself—is to provide alternatives to repression. That's because sexual repression leads to emotional repression. "Our whole thing is tension prevention," Kunst says. "The ordinance is tension prevention; Transperience is tension prevention; tension prevention is everything we're doing right now."

Kunst resigned as cochairperson of the Dade County Coalition in mid-February, not long after the commission vote. There were personality difficulties. He had alienated some people by propagandizing for his Transperience Center, and his emphasis on new concepts of sexuality—specifically the concept that everyone is bisexual—was not considered too smart politically. Nevertheless, he remains very much in the forefront of the gay rights campaign.

It's not hard to see why; the man is dynamic to a fault. Jack Campbell says that Kunst once threw so much information at him so fast that he, Campbell, actually started hallucinating. When Dr. Rockway, the "clinical director" at Transperience, notes that the gay rights struggle shows that this really is the New South, Kunst butts in excitedly. "We are taking the energy from Woodstock," he says, "and saying, 'Hey, this is where it's at, and we're taking it over.'"

"Woodstock is the key," Rockway adds. "It's a new community, a new feeling. We at Transperience have made an analysis of how to continue it."

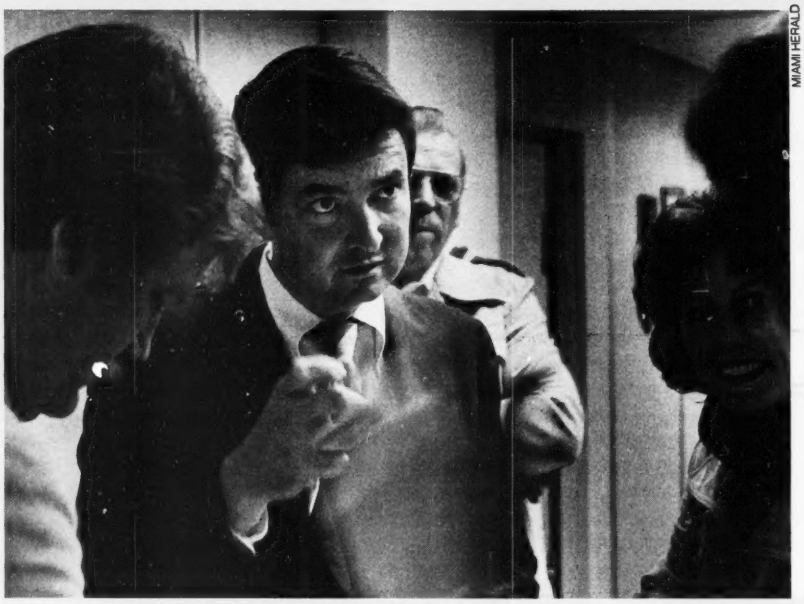
"Transperience is I-am-you consciousness-feeling," Kunst announces. "Life is like ice cream—there's 38 flavors out there, you choose the flavor you want."

Bob Kunst is not the only unusual personality in the gay rights camp. Take David Benson. He and his wife Janice are leaders of MAMA—the Mothers' Alliance of Miami Americans. ("We chose the name because many of us are family people," says Janice, "and we liked the acronym.") MAMA supports the gay rights ordinance; in fact, every Saturday from eleven to one it stages a small demonstration on Lincoln Road Mall, the heart of senior citizen land in Miami Beach. MAMA, as it happens, is an outgrowth of the Aquarian Foundation, a "New Age church" founded by Reverend Keith Milton Rhinehart ("the most scientifically tested-researched-documented physical phenomenon/adept medium in the world," as one acolyte put it to me). Reverend Rhinehart, who has hair down his back and looks spacey, has done things like turn water into wine.

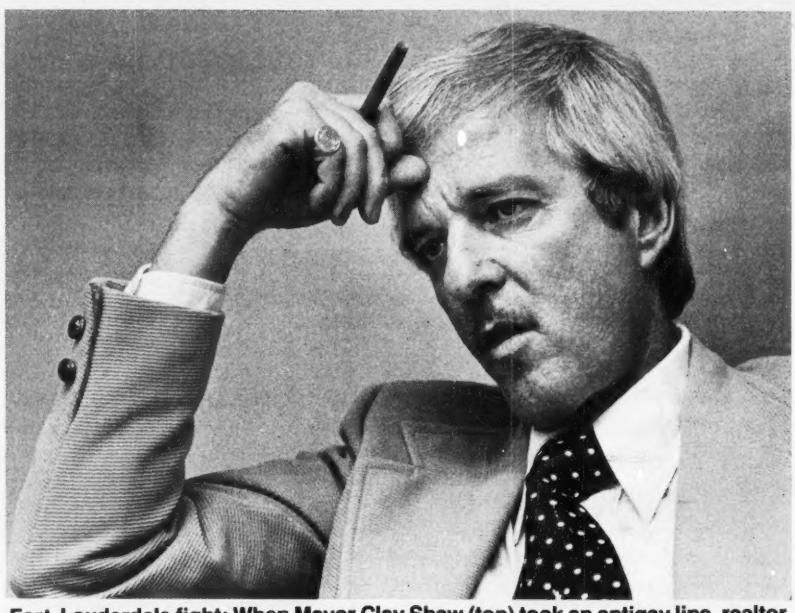
David Benson is a minister for the Aquarian Foundation. He and his followers stage these demonstrations, they explain, because they're concerned about human rights. "And in the Bible," Janice adds, "right after where it says homosexuals should be stoned, it says witches should be stoned too. We're not witches—but most people don't separate spiritualism and witchcraft."

"We do have kind of a personal interest in this," David admits.

Of course, not every supporter of gay rights is quite so fringe. Tom Puroff, for example, is concerned about a different and more likely kind of witch hunt. Puroff is a 38-year-old psych center director at Florida International University, and a couple of months ago he helped form the Educators' Task Force. The task force is made up of both gays and



MIAMI HERALD



MIAMI HERALD

Fort Lauderdale fight: When Mayor Clay Shaw (top) took an antigay line, realtor Roger Luckett (bottom) tried unsuccessfully to unseat him

straights who meet every Monday night to discuss ways of putting out the facts on the gay rights issue. They make up info packs which show that child molestation is predominantly a heterosexual phenomenon ("most often done by uncles and clergymen, that sort of thing," Puroff explains) and that most homosexuality is not a matter of choice or habit but a stage at which one may find oneself. They do this because they're afraid that if the ordinance loses in June, Save Our Children will launch an attack on the schools. "It will be a witchhunt," Puroff says. "No teacher's job is going to be safe."

The school situation is anomalous. The Dade County public schools function independently, so only private and parochial schools are affected by the Metro ordinance. (This, of course, is especially threatening to ordinance foes, who see visions of drag queens in Baptist classrooms.) The United Teachers of Dade, the local AFL-CIO teachers union, has a clause in its contract that guarantees that teachers' personal lives will be their own concern. Still, says Puroff, a lot of teachers are reluctant to get involved. Sometimes straight teachers won't join because their spouses won't let them, or because they're afraid their spouses might get suspicious. Sometimes people who give money don't feel like writing the name of the organization on their checks. They make the checks out to an individual instead.

When you talk to people in Miami, you hear about offices where you were considered gay if you didn't sign Save Our Children's petitions. (A former staff writer is suing the Hispanic edition of *Cosmopolitan*, charging that he was fired for passing out a coalition counterpetition.) You hear about churches where they kept two lists—one list of members who did sign the petition, and one list of members who didn't. You hear about teachers who were intimidated into signing.

"I'm sure many people signed the petition because they were intimidated," says one Dade County elementary teacher who wasn't. "It wasn't an organized effort, it was two secretaries—but if you've ever been in any kind of business, you know who really runs it. When I refused, they acted startled—'You won't sign? Why not?'—Look, I have to go. I don't think I should be talking to you. . . . Oh my God, if you use my *name*. . . ."

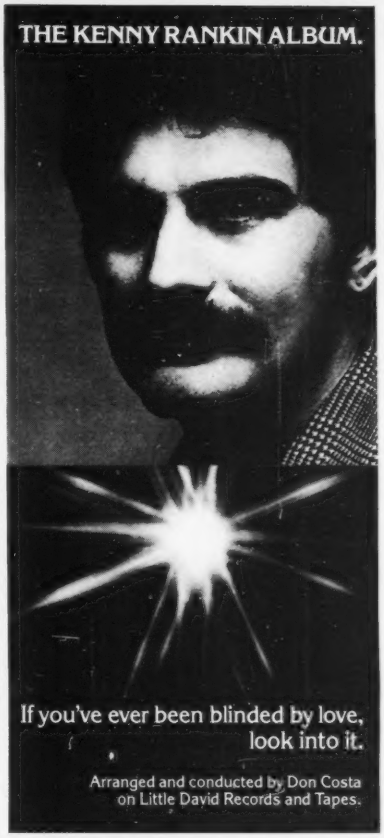
On the other hand, you also hear about people like Neal Rogers, a 34-year-old radio talk show host who took the mike one afternoon and announced that he was gay. The day before, he had heard two leaders from the National Gay Task Force on another radio talk show. They said gays should come out and identify themselves, and he thought it was a good idea.

Anita Bryant would disagree. The Save Our Children crowd may not want to root out every homosexual in town, but they'd sure like to keep them out of sight. And what's wrong with that? Why shouldn't homosexuals act like everybody else and stop making people uncomfortable?

The answer to that, as any gay rights advocate would tell you, is that a person should be free to love whom he wants without his life being ruined if someone sees them holding hands. Viewed that way, it's a simple question of civil rights for an oppressed minority, just like the black civil rights struggles of the sixties. To others, though, homosexuals are no more a valid minority than "the uglies, the fatties and the nudies" one newspaper columnist saw waiting in the wings. To Save Our Children, the issue is the seduction of vulnerable youths. So the debate in Miami has been an emotional free-for-all, carried on without any ground rules, without even any common definitions of the issue that's being fought. The real issue is whether or not to lift a taboo.

It may be a bit late to argue that point, however; for too many people, the taboo no longer exists. Take Carl, the 18-year-old from Fort Lauderdale who was hanging out at the Marlin Beach. As we sat by the pool discussing the referendum, I asked facetiously if he felt recruited. He considered the question. "It's hard to say," he said. "I like the people, I like the atmosphere of gay places. I'll see how I turn out, but I feel comfortable with the role I have now. Most people I know are satisfied with their roles. They're really more into their careers." No abomination here; to Carl, homosexuality is just a role.

It's no wonder that Anita felt compelled to protest the recent White House meeting between gay activists and a presidential aide. Virtually every gay leader in south Florida brings up Jimmy Carter's stand for human rights. Tom, the New York restaurant owner ensconced at the Marlin Beach, mentions it too. To him, it is inconceivable that homosexuality is not on its way to becoming as acceptable as house cats. And as for Anita Bryant? "Let's face it," he says. "The heterosexual world has to have one last kick before society turns around completely and says, 'It's all right.' "●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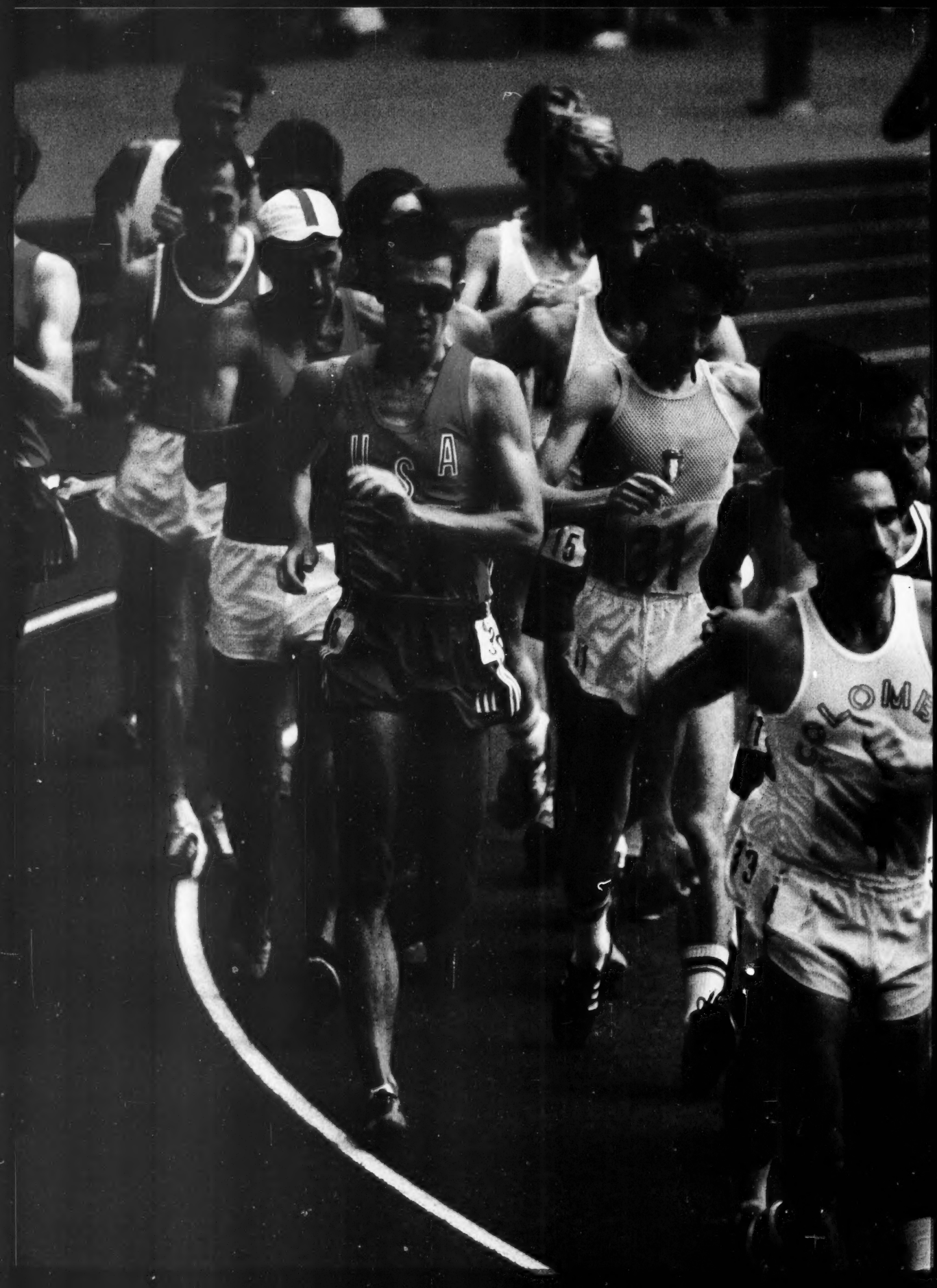
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TOGO

Ron Laird a walking disaster

Twenty years of triumph have brought the U.S.'s most decorated amateur athlete poverty, homelessness and anonymity. But he keeps on struttin'

By Sam Merrill

Ron Laird is an amateur athlete from the United States. That's why you've never heard of him.

Yes, I know, you've heard of a lot of American amateurs: Mark Spitz, Bruce Jenner, Dorothy Hamill, Frank Shorter, Howard Davis, Dwight Stones. . . . And if you're a real cognoscente, you can probably also name Jenni Chandler, John Naber, Kathy McMillan, Scott May, Janice Merrill, John Peterson and, who knows, maybe even a few more. But not Ron Laird. Right?

Yet Laird is the most decorated amateur athlete in the history of American sports. He has won 70 national championships, set 81 U.S. records, been named to 16 All-American Teams and 31 international tours (during 2 of which he went undefeated in a total of 24 races). He's been on four Olympic Teams, won the gold medal at the Pan-American Games and two bronze medals at the world championships of his event. Then how come you've never heard of him? Because Laird is an amateur, and everyone else you've named is a pro.

One can receive payment for services rendered in numerous ways. Money, fame and sex, probably the most orthodox currencies, are the first three that come to mind. They are also the three types of remuneration with which athletes we call amateurs are most familiar—the money coming in under-the-table payments from set promoters and vertically and horizontally striped shoe companies. But no one has ever paid Ron Laird a dime to compete in a track meet or wear a certain brand of shoe. As he puts it, "Being an Olympic athlete has never even gotten me laid."

But Laird is not America's purest amateur athlete by choice. "I'd love to get my hands on some of those illegal payoffs," he admits. But he never will. American audiences simply—and perhaps wisely—will not pay to see the race Laird, so to speak, runs.

Ron Laird is a walker.

That's the event in which several dozen superbly conditioned athletes waddle and flap along like crazed chickens with a severe pituitary malfunction. In Europe—especially eastern Europe—Laird, who walks faster than most high school track stars can run, would be a wealthy and privileged celebrity. But in America, 20 years of athletic triumphs have brought poverty ("I've been living on $3,000 a year since 1971—it's easy"), homelessness (Laird used to live out of an old Volkswagen, but it blew up in Mexico, where he was training at altitude for the Olympics; he hopes to spend the next four years at the homes of friends) and anonymity. Relentless anonymity.

But in January, something strange happened: Laird was nominated for the James E. Sullivan Memorial Trophy, the annual award given by the AAU to the outstanding American amateur of the previous year. This preposterously pure Olympian, who until now had spent his life training alone, traveling alone, winning races nobody bothered to watch, setting records only the record keepers knew about, was suddenly in danger of receiving testimonial luncheons at Mamma Leone's, award banquets at the Atlanta Hyatt House, first-class plane tickets, groupies . . . the Sullivan Trophy, an Oscar in a jockstrap. At the age of 38, Ron Laird was finally getting a chance to turn pro.

As soon as his nomination was an-

Walkathon: Ron Laird, number 38, at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES DRAKE/SPORTS ILLUSTRATED © TIME INC.

nounced, I decided to visit Laird, as an ornithologist might visit the last bald eagle on it's eightieth birthday. I wanted to spend a typical day, perhaps one of the last typical days, with America's quintessential amateur athlete.

Shortly before my visit with Laird, I had, coincidentally, spent a couple of days with Bruce Jenner and a morning with Mark Spitz. The general ambience had been one of sports cars, beautiful homes, fine clothes, gorgeous women, world travel and big-money media hypes. I don't believe the word "amateur" ever came up.

Naturally, I expected to find Laird living a very different lifestyle than his two former Olympic teammates.

I was right. Ron Laird has spent most of this winter in his friend's garage.

Costa Mesa is a beach town about 50 miles down the coast from L.A. As in all the Pacific resort communities between Long Beach and San Clemente, the second homes of the sun-belt rich snake along the ocean in an unbroken chain of cantilevered terraces from which, on a smogless day, you can see the mountains of Catalina rising straight up out of the sea. A couple of blocks back from the ocean, modest but sturdy homes cling to a steep hill. Beyond the hill lies a vast plain of saltboxes. Bryan Overton—social studies teacher, cross-country coach, devout Mormon—lives in a corner saltbox. Ron Laird lives in Bryan Overton's garage.

Nobody answered the door, so I walked up the driveway, checked the porch, the yards—all deserted. The garage seemed empty, too. But then a door opened way back in the far right-hand corner, behind some paint cans, and Laird stepped out. He squinted down at his watch, put on his glasses, then said, "Good morning. Glad you could make it. Come on in."

"In" was a tiny, airless, windowless room without plumbing or running water. A cot and the door occupied two of the four walls; the remaining decor consisted of a small desk, a trophy shelf, numerous cardboard cartons and a great mountain of worn-out athletic shoes.

Ron fell back into his cot, embarked upon an elaborate wake-up ritual that included, but was not limited to, grinding his fists into his eyeballs, running his fingers through his hair, patting his stomach and cracking his knuckles. At six-one, with long, supple, finely muscled arms and legs and a pair of predatory eyes, Ron Laird *should* have looked like the super athlete he is. But he didn't. Instead, he looked oddly wimpish, like Don Knotts after ten years of steroid therapy.

"Make yourself at home," he said. I pulled up a carton.

One is tempted to blame Ron Laird for his predicament. I mean, how could this country's most decorated amateur athlete end up broke, aging, totally unknown and living in a goddamn garage? Somehow, it's just *got* to be his fault.

But it isn't. In fact, as soon as he decided to seriously pursue racewalking, there was really no other way his life could have worked out. So in the end, there is only one question: What kind of person would make that decision, would devote his life to a sport that has absolutely nothing to offer even its greatest champion but poverty and obscurity?

"Me," Ron answered earnestly and without a flicker of embarrassment. "*I'm* that kind of person. As a kid, I was so intent upon doing something—*anything*—in athletics that if I hadn't been successful it would have been the end of my life."

Ron Laird is not America's purest amateur athlete by choice. American audiences will not pay to see the race he walks

Generally, parental pressure is the cause of a child's feeling that it will be "the end of his life" if he doesn't make it in sports; either the father is living vicariously through his son's accomplishments, or the father is so well known as an athlete that the son feels inadequate unless he can "measure up." But Ron's obsession with athletic success seems to have sprung full-blown out of his own head. His father is a retired civil engineer whose only interest in sports is a quadrennial demonstration of contempt for his son's career; he steadfastly refuses to watch Ron perform at the Olympic Games. Even Ron's identical twin brother, Don, has never shown the slightest interest in or ability for athletic competition. Yet from early childhood, Laird persisted in a single-minded and entirely self-motivated quest for stardom somewhere in the sporting world.

"I tried everything. In high school, when I couldn't make the baseball team, I went out for track. I ran the half-mile, the mile, the two-mile. I even threw the discus. Then one day I saw some guys racewalking and figured I could wiggle along like that, too. So I gave it a try." Laird had finally discovered a sport he could excel at. Five months later, he was ranked fifth nationally at the mile.

I asked if he thought that, as a teenager, he'd dedicated himself to sports to the exclusion of other normal interests.

"Let me put it this way: I had my first date at the age of 22."

Then Bryan Overton's Volkswagen entered the garage. Conversation ceased as the tiny room filled up with noise and fumes. Ron's host was about 35, medium height and build, with slightly suspicious blue eyes and sandy hair shaved so close to the scalp that his head resembled a giant thumb.

Ron and Bryan, who is also a walker, discussed the indoor track meet they'd both be competing in that night. "It's nothing special," Ron explained. "They don't give illegal payoffs, so none of the big names will be there."

Then Ron suggested a seven-mile tune-up along the beach. But Bryan demurred. "Later," he said. "First I'm gonna get a haircut."

While we waited, Ron opened one of his cartons. It was filled with medals, awards, clippings. Leafing through a stack of yellowing newspapers, I saw photos of Ron winning major races in all stages of life; from jug-eared teenager to streamlined youth to adult on the threshold of middle age. But although the face changed, the rest of the scene was always strangely similar; a grinning Ron Laird, drenched in sweat, breaks the tape at the finish line while a child, a dog and perhaps two or three grown-ups look on. Often, the grown-ups are laughing.

"During all this time," I asked, clutching 20 years of clippings in my two fists, "where did you live?"

"With friends, mostly. And girlfriends. God bless single girls with their own apartment. They help keep the U.S. Olympic Team going."

"So, essentially, you're a moocher. A leech."

"I prefer to think of myself as a good friend and a charming houseguest. But I *have* to live this way. You just can't work and train at the same time."

Actually, Ron Laird has worked most of his life, including an eight-year stint as a draftsman for the Pomona, California, Water Department. "But my times were going steadily downhill. My daily training routine, except on race days, includes 45 minutes of stretching exercises, 12 to 15 miles of roadwork and 500 to 600 sit-ups. There's no way I

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can do that and get the rest I need when I'm giving away eight to ten hours a day on the job." So it came down to work or walking. Naturally, he chose walking.

On the surface, a compelling rationalization for life as a leech. But what about the other Olympic athletes? They aren't all moochers. And isn't there a government-sponsored program in which participating corporations pay Olympic athletes-in-training full wages for four hours of work a day?

Ron answered that question by handing me a letter he'd recently received from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Between the flattery and the grateful acknowledgement of all Ron has done for America in international competition were interspersed such phrases as "You may have come along five years too early," and "Due to a temporary shortage of funds. . . ."

The language was fuzzy, but the message was clear: The U.S. doesn't win foreign-policy brownie points by out-*walking* the Russians, so Ron Laird can go take a hike.

When Bryan Overton returned from the barber, his former crew cut now reduced to Telly Savalas' five o'clock shadow, Ron got his gear together for the workout. The big problem was selecting a pair of shoes. He rummaged through the pile that occupied nearly 50 percent of his floor space. Most of the shoes were so worn out they looked like garbage to me. And at least one pair actually *was* garbage. "Look at these. Nike Waffle Trainers. Hardly used at all," Ron said, holding up a pair so tattered they appeared on the verge of disintegration. "I found them in a trash can at UCLA. Can you believe somebody threw these out?"

Eventually, Ron turned up a red Puma that seemed to satisfy him. After considerable thrashing around in the heap, he unearthed its mate. Then we went for a walk.

Actually, Ron and Bryan did the walking while I jogged along behind. That little stroll on the beach revealed more about the loneliness of the long-distance walker than anything Ron could have told me. And even if he did tell me, I wouldn't have believed him. I had to hear it for myself.

The first time it happened, I thought I'd heard wrong. But 50 yards later, it happened again. And again as we rounded the tip of a long pier and headed back toward shore.

"Hup-two-three-four. Hup-two-three-four," taunted a little girl whose legs dangled from the terrace of one of the beach houses.

"Up yours," added her slightly older brother. "Hey, you queers. Up yours."

Their high-pitched giggling was still audible behind us when we approached a co-ed volleyball game. "Shake it up, baby," said a sunburned man with a blond beard. Ron gave him the finger.

"Oh, you'd love that, wouldn't you?" the guy replied. One of the girls in their game cackled hysterically. You can keep your abrasions and contusions. Even your broken bones. In the world of sports, few things hurt more than a pretty girl's laughter.

But the worst part came later, on the pier. A grizzly old black man with a fishing pole and a wicker basket coolly surveyed Ron's world-class racewalking technique, then offered, "Jeez, y'all look like sumpin' crawled out of a buffalo's ass."

During the past few years I've jogged through suburban and city streets, in parks and playgrounds, along highways and country roads, and although there've been some unflattering remarks, by far the most common response has been warm surprise. People smile, wave, wink; kids offer their palms for slapping, like a third-base coach to a passing home-run hitter.

Laird's lifestyle is different from his Olympic teammates'. He spent most of this winter in his friend's garage

Apparently, the world loves a runner.

Apparently, the world hates a walker.

Something about the sight of a grown man slithering along, hipsprung, earthbound, knees and elbows prescribing frantic circles in the air—in short, walking while every cell in his body is obviously screaming out to run—taps a primal spring of hatred, even fear, in many people. Perhaps it's frustration (after watching Ron a while, I'd notice that my teeth were clenched, that I was secretly rooting for him to break out of the invisible chains that seemed to confine him; to run, to be free). Perhaps it's the effeminate quality of the swiveling hip movement ("I don't want *his* kind coming through *my* neighborhood"). Or perhaps it's just simple, grassroots fascism: a fear of the unusual, a manic impulse to rip out the heart of the deviant individual. But whatever the cause, the symptom is obvious. People laugh at, taunt and ridicule walkers, even walkers who are wearing a U.S. Olympic Team T-shirt. I knew before I met him that for 20 years Ron Laird has been broke, unappreciated, unknown. But I had no idea he was an outlaw.

The afternoon drifted idly by in the Overton living room. Bryan watched John Wayne zap Japs in *Flying Tigers*, cheered loudly every time a Zero flamed out (Ron whispered that the large wooden cabinet in the garage was filled, not with clothes, but with guns; a Mormon, Bryan believes that Armageddon is near and, apparently, he wants to be physically as well as spiritually armed for the occasion). Ron played the piano for a while, and not badly. I flipped through a couple of magazines, considered how well Ron's personality has stood up to the arrows outrageous fortune has slung at him. So far, I'd detected none of the odd little tics one expects to find in a man who could easily choose to describe himself as a victim of society.

Then Ron asked if I recognized a strident but catchy piece that seemed to combine equal parts of a Sousa march, Wagner aria and McDonald's jingle. I said I'd never heard it before. It was *Dein Kampf Freiheit*, a Nazi anthem. "Something I picked up in Munich," Ron explained. . . . Well, everybody's entitled to just one odd little tic.

As Ron sat shirtless on the piano stool, I was astonished to note a generous roll of winter lard lapping over the waistband of his shorts. He called it his "post-Olympic let-down."

"After the pressure of the Summer Games and the U.S.-Russia track meet, I came out here to relax and gained about 20 pounds before I knew it. I'm just starting to get back into shape now."

"But if you're out of shape, why are you racing?"

"To get in some speed work, break up my training routine—you can't do 600 sit-ups *every* day—see some old friends. . . ."

All valid points, but their cumulative logic still fell considerably short of an answer. So I tried rephrasing the question. "If you're overweight, you're not going to do very well at the race tonight, are you?"

He laughed easily. "I'll be lucky to get a third."

"Then why go?"

Ron paused briefly (blushed? I thought so, but was not certain). "It doesn't really matter how I do at a small race like this one," he finally blurted, the necessary candor rendering him far more uncomfortable than had the razzing he'd received on the beach. "I've got nothing to prove here. Everybody knows I'm the best."

The one-mile walk was scheduled for 8 p.m., so we went out for a light meal around four. Before entering the restaurant, Ron selected a sunny patch of parking-lot asphalt, hawked and spat, then knelt, scrutinized his own expectorate like a Delphic oracle examining the entrails of a sacrificial beast. "Looks like a good race coming up," he said.

I thought he was joking. "Can you see your future in there?" I inquired in my best George Burns straightmanese. But Ron wasn't kidding.

"In a way. After you've lived in close harmony with your body for so many years, you get to know all the signs." I distinctly remember not asking

him what those signs were. But he told me anyway. "A slight cloudiness usually indicates a low-grade infection. If it's cloudy with a green tint, there's a major infection. And if it's green and bounces when it hits the ground, you're probably running a pretty high fever."

It is perhaps somewhat unfair to quote Laird's dissertation on the pathology of sputum without noting that it is not an isolated fetish but, rather, part of a total absorption with his bodily functions—typical of many serious athletes. And Ron is as concerned with what goes into his body as he is with what comes out.

When the water arrived, he drained his glass while wolfing down several handfuls of multicolored vitamin pills. "I take about 40 a day," he announced, anticipating the obvious question. "The B group, A, D, C and E." Then he launched into a rather extensive lecture on nutrition; a sometime vegetarian, Ron prefers to get protein from vegetable and dairy sources than from what

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAM MERRILL

Ronnie One Note: Whether searching for the right piano key or the right "walking" shoe, Ron Laird, come spring, is concerned about only one thing—getting rid of his annual "winter roll"

he seems to enjoy calling "the muscle tissue of dead animals." He also believes in fasting. "It rests your organs and allows the body to rid itself of poisons. My longest fast was 21 days."

Ron went on interminably about the benefits of his vitamin-saturated, vegetarian diet. "I can now train harder, race harder and recuperate from workouts faster than in my old junk food and dead animal days."

Interruption came none too soon. "Are you ready to order?" asked our waitress, the sort of 19-year-old that does not appear east of the Mississippi, north of the Mason-Dixon Line: smiling, well-scrubbed, preposterously healthy and idiotically devoid of even the most essential self-preservatory suspicions. Ron asked for a spinach salad and a date. She giggled, flirted, lingered far longer than necessary before wiggling off to the kitchen.

Not surprisingly, the conversation shifted abruptly from nutrition to sex. Ron's attitude toward women was hard to fix. While discussing the girlfriends in New York, St. Louis and California with whom he stays whenever and for however long he likes, Laird is the perfect modern gentleman. They are all "great ladies"—"attractive," "intelligent," if anything, *too* good for the nomadic likes of him. Yet he dismisses the incidental women in his life with vulgar and condescendingly sexist contempt: They are either being "nailed" or ogled ("I loved watching those little gymnasts at the Olympics—even the 14-year-olds looked good to me"). I couldn't decide whether he is an imperfect romantic or a soft-hearted misogynist. Or neither—just a grateful houseguest.

Ron cannot sit still very long. While waiting for the food to arrive, he stretched constantly, crossing and uncrossing his legs. He also exhibited the rather disconcerting habit of slowly sinking deeper and deeper into his seat until a disembodied head was looking straight up at me from the bottom of his chair. Yet he continued talking, returned, after the waitress was forgotten, to the three subjects that seem to dominate his consciousness: food, health and training. And although I was not particularly enthralled by the details of how various vitamins and nutrients enhance or impair Ron's athletic performance, I couldn't help but marvel at his single-minded devotion to excellence. It has been my observation at literary gatherings that one can instantly tell the published from the unpublished authors; the amateurs jabber incessantly about art, the professionals speak only of money. Perhaps the same is true of athletes. But I can't be sure. I've never heard another big-time athlete discuss his sport with such aesthetic purity. Ron Laird just might be the only amateur I've ever met.

After the waitress had carried away our empty salad bowls—and absorbed a fusillade of grotesquely lecherous remarks that she naively mistook for compliments—I asked Ron what he thought his chances were of winning the Sullivan Trophy.

He said nothing, shrugged, returned to his coffee.

I persisted. "You won the National Championship in Madison Square Garden last February. You reset your own 3-mile and 5,000-meter records at the AAU Championships in June. You've totally dominated your sport for 18 years and, if anything, you seem to be getting better with age. Those are fairly solid qualifications for the Sullivan Trophy, don't you think?"

"Maybe." But Ron didn't say what we were both thinking: that Bruce Jenner had become an instant media celebrity by winning the Olympic decathlon and then signing a long-term TV contract with ABC. The way Ron put it, "They don't usually give the Sullivan Trophy to a guy nobody heard of."

In response to Laird's request for financial aid, one federal official replied, "You may have come along five years too early"

The Long Beach Arena looks like a scale model of Madison Square Garden; if you stand on your knees, you think you're in a major auditorium. The track meet, too, was small-scale. As Ron had predicted, none of the big names showed up. But the paying customers didn't seem to mind. In the 11-year-old girls division, a short-legged Chicano and a tall, loping black brought the fans to their feet with a ferocious 1,000-yard dogfight. And in the masters race, Bruce Dern put more effort into his strong fifth-place finish than he'd put into the role of Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*.

Then Ron entered the warm-up area and his appearance caused an impressive stir on the arena floor. In the tightly bound subculture of track and field, Ron Laird apparently occupies the exalted position of senior guru. Competitors from other events ducked in front of him to snap their Instamatics under his nose. More sophisticated—or inhibited—local athletes politely requested his autograph. Children approached him with questions about training and racing technique. Although most of the fans had no idea who Ron Laird was—or did know but couldn't have cared less—to the other athletes, the most decorated amateur in the history of American sports was truly a demigod. Earlier that afternoon, Ron had been pummeled with abuse. Now he stood at the center of an adoring throng. I suddenly understood why he had come to this minor track meet with no reasonable hope of finishing better than third. Everybody's ego can use a booster shot from time to time. And this was very definitely Ron's time.

Laird walked his mile in a rather comical 7:11, a full minute off the winner's pace and only three seconds faster than his best performance of the year he began racewalking in high school. Three men crossed the finish line before him. But nobody seemed to mind that, least of all Ron. And after the race, the PA announcer made a big deal about how lucky they were to have had such an internationally acclaimed athlete competing in their little meet. Perhaps forgetting what event they had just watched, or failed to watch, the crowd gave Ron a polite ovation.

There's no place to sit in the lobby of the Long Beach Arena, so Ron stood around, shifted his weight uneasily from one rubbery leg to the other, discussed his future plans. He mentioned Mexico, his favorite training ground for two important reasons: high altitude and cheap living. "Maybe I'll move down there for a couple of years, stay with an athlete I know, then give the Olympics another shot in Moscow. Or maybe . . ."

The words not spoken were easy enough to fill in: " . . . if I win the Sullivan Trophy, I'll retire."

Of course. The Sullivan Trophy would mean recognition, and Ron Laird has already won everything else.

In a non-Olympic year, a year in which the glamorous decathlon record had not fallen to a man who looks more like Apollo than is probably good for him, who knows? Laird just might have won the Sullivan Trophy.

But on February 7, 1977, the AAU announced that Bruce Jenner had been named the outstanding amateur athlete of the previous year. Ron Laird was not surprised.

On March 23, 1977, after 15 miles of roadwork and 600 sit-ups, he took off for Mexico. ●

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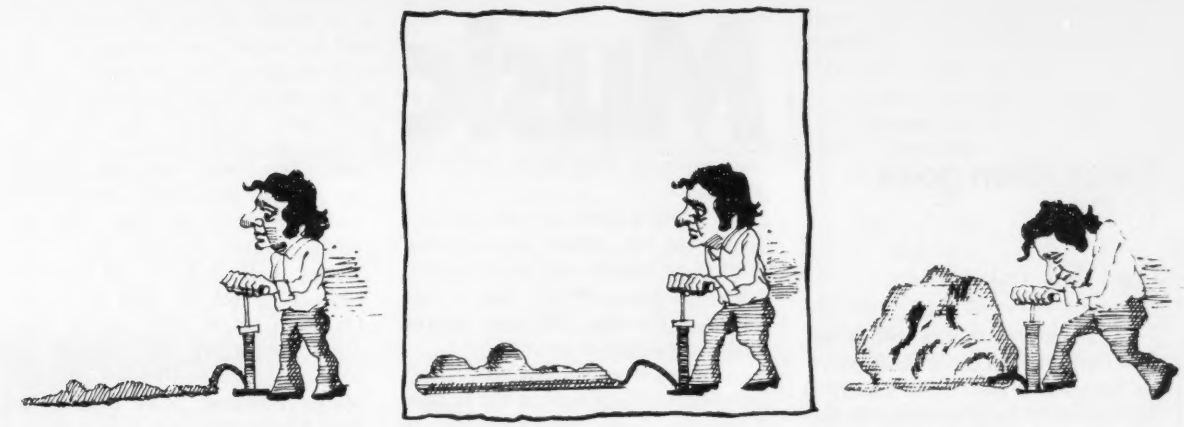

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Music

Peter Allen goes to Rio

By Cliff Jahr

Leaping onstage in a white suit, Hawaiian shirt and two-tone shoes, Peter Allen slams into "Love Crazy," a fast sendup of Latin romance old-Hollywood style, and the fans begin to boogie. His fingers blur as they attack the keys. His deadpan turns our way to count the house. Allen is on fire tonight for the late show at Washington D.C.'s The Cellar Door, and his Australian-Manhattan twang puts a wry edge on the lyric, while one of his legs crosses over the other to tell us he is not only love crazy, he is weary as hell doing this number for the 99th time, my dear.

But now the bridge is getting to him, and, like Elton John at such moments, the body must break free of the piano. Allen's legs split side-saddle on the bench, then go fully spread-eagle to pound home the beat. Here comes the big finish and both legs fly off in a high double kick—PAH DUM! The fans go wild, as Allen beams shyly, aware he's got us.

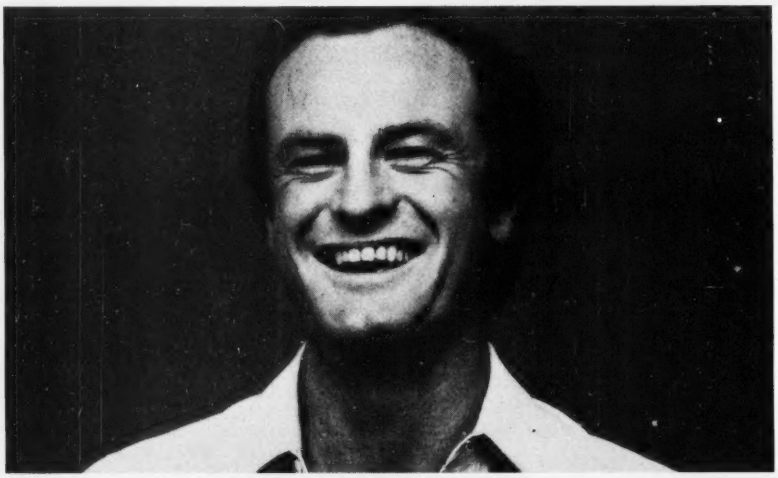
"Where were you the first show?" he drawls, campily. "If I tell you those people were dull. . . ." Beginning the next song, he adds, "Well, better to bomb here than Las Vegas."

Peter Allen is an outlandish showman of the Elton John school and a most original singer-songwriter with roots in the cabaret. His Latin satires, soft rockers and well-made ballads are sophisticated enough for postacid grownups to enjoy. He seems about to break out nationally, after struggling through a score of abundant years.

In the late sixties he was best known in celebrity circles as a partygoer and that odd thing, a "star's husband." His career clung to obscurity despite help from important friends like Judy Garland, Bette Midler and Helen Reddy, for whose shows he was the warmup act. He cowrote (with Jeff Barry) Olivia Newton-John's monster hit, "I Honestly Love You," although it was she who won two Grammys, not Allen. He was also married to Liza Minnelli for six years, but even with those good connections and wide audience exposure, four albums went down the tube.

Until last year, he was unknown to anyone but cabaret goers in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. "It's sad about Peter," said a club owner at the time. "He's so talented and he can't seem to connect."

Then it began. Last October Allen played a sellout week at The Bottom Line, New York's hippest big club. In February, CBS's *Who's Who* profiled him as the fast-rising heir to Judy Garland's old cult—which he is not. But it is anybody's guess what TV viewers in heartland America made of Peter Allen wailing his tonsils out, and ducking with Chris Allen ("who was not really my brother, but Chris' father always told the press he was, are you *ready*?"). Judy Garland found them playing in Hong Kong and swept the boys off to join her show in London. On the night of their arrival, Allen dined memorably with Garland and some of her pals—Rudolph Nureyev, Margo Fontaine, John Lennon and Paul McCartney—but it had been a hard day's night for the young Aussie and he was exhausted. "It was jet lag," he now says, dismissing an anecdote friends like to tell. "Judy and the rest of them talked between themselves and I—well, I took a little nap at the table.



Peter Allen: The only male really launched by cabaret

Dan Rather's question about "pansexuality." In any case, the Nielsen rating jumped while Allen was on, and broke the show's record.

Finally, last month all 2,700 tickets for his concert at Lincoln Center were snapped up quickly. A&M, his record label, sensing heat now after tepid sales of his last two albums, is quickly getting out a live album. They have also lined him up with a new manager, none other than Dee Anthony, who last year masterminded Peter Frampton's Cinderella story.

If Allen connects at 32, he'll have come a long way from his unusual childhood in Australia. He was playing piano in clubs by age 10. When he was 13, his father committed suicide. Soon thereafter, he moved to Sydney and turned to singing professionally. He teamed up to do a brother act on TV Same thing happened the next night at Noel Coward's, and then George Saunders'. It was just, y'know, *jet* lag."

Allen awoke from this bit of blasé catnapping to begin ten years of decadence among the stars, in which he saw everything, did everyone, and went everywhere twice. As he says in one of his best ballads, penned when he started to write six years ago:

Just ask me I been there
Seen angels and sin there
Knock and they'll let you in there
Just mention my name
I've been through it all

What kept him from becoming just another jaded lounge act was the flowering of his unusual style in the recent cabaret craze. At a time when Liza was singing on the silver screen about life as cabaret, Allen was begin-

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ning regular appearances in them. In no time his gigs at Reno Sweeney in New York were SRO. His songs could be heard, as well, issuing from the lips of new cabaret luminaries like Ellen Greene and Judith Cohen, who seem to identify with his tough romantic sensibilities ("All my songs have an edge on them: 'I love you—*but*' ").

Peter Allen is the only *male* who has been really launched by cabaret, which happens to be, in this country, the special preserve of female artists. Its elbow-to-elbow intimacy invites performers to be nakedly personal about feelings and shortcomings, particularly in the between-song chatter, something that baritones rarely are good at. Except for Peter Allen, warts 'n all, whose affectionate abuse of the audience and nonthreatening sexual ambiguity come off just right.

"Is it bad to know a lot of things about a lot of things?" Allen is saying over Diet Pepsis in a Georgetown hotel the Saturday morning of his Washington engagement. "You can't be sophisticated these days. It's a bad word, all of a sudden, and the common man is king. Well, I hate *All in the Family*, and I never planned to be a common ordinary person." He smiles slyly. "But I'm not world-weary. I mean, I *live*. I have more *fun* than. . . ."

Allen seems small and soft-spoken. Not much like the crazed thing of last night that finished the boogie-reggae "I Go To Rio," shaking maracas and blowing a whistle in a minute-long, shoulder-shimmying ass-wiggle, looking like Carmen Miranda on too many reds. Today, in chinos and a plaid shirt, he looks a bit like that person's older brother, a beekeeper maybe, and even Allen remarks on his modest demeanor offstage: "When I look in the mirror before I go on, I can't believe these people are paying to see this man up there in sequins, dancing around in space. I hate people to come in the dressing room the minute I get off, because they think, 'What happened? Where is that fabulous person? This person's so short and sweaty.' "

Allen's audience is mostly hetero couples ("I'm not camp enough for a gay audience, isn't that ridiculous?"). His slow ballads work just as well as the hand-on-hip material because he puts no camp animation into them. When he sings "I Honestly Love You," it has a plaintive depth Newton-John didn't give it, and his yet unrecorded "Don't Cry Out Loud" has a hit single sound about it, especially if he gives it a big Barry Manilow arrangement.

"Nobody's going to look at me like I'm Peter Frampton," he says, "you know, *swoon*. But I think they get the romantic message."

Though he's comfortable in middle-of-the-road pop, his best-made songs are often coauthored with Carole Bayer Sager and spring from his almost Brechtian cynicism about the glittery, dissipated world of his past:

> Using the low-life to polish my wit
> Choosing the crazies and hoping they'd fit
> Saying half empty's the same as half full
> All of my lines getting harder to pull

"It was easier to write when my life had a lot of highs and lows," says Allen, glancing out the window at the capital skyline. "I've been happy with someone for three years now, and people just don't want to hear in a song how you grow fabulous onions."

Last year Allen moved to California, buying a glass beach house just north of La Jolla. "It's a fabulous little unspoiled town," he says. "When they try to build a Burger King, everybody kind of throws their bodies under the bulldozers. I can hide out there, except—well, I don't know. I was digging in my onions the other day and I had to drive into town for some stuff that I ran out of. I didn't shave or anything. I was all dirty, of course, and wouldn't you know? Four people ran over to me: 'Oh, you're Peter Allen on *Who's Who*!' " Allen crosses his legs and gives me a smirk. "Now don't tell me I have to start shaving to go buy manure."

Well, if there's a song in it . . .

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Records

By Jim Miller

★★★ **North Star,** *Philip Glass* (Virgin); ★ **Kites,** *Jade Warrior* (Island); ★ **Stratosfear,** *Tangerine Dream* (Virgin). These new "state of the art" albums explore, with varying success, a brave new world of technical wizardry, hypnotic monotony and trippy avant-gardism.

Like most rock groups eager to work terra incognito, Jade Warrior and Tangerine Dream rely heavily on electronic gimmicks. In the case of *Kites*, the result is a dainty montage of nouveau Muzak, the perfect disc for your next Sufi prayer breakfast. Tangerine Dream follows a less ascetic muse, with lush sweeps of electronic sound. Small matter that some passages of *Stratosfear* pack all the wallop of metronomes on parade: such icy precision is presumably one of this group's attractions.

Philip Glass, by contrast, avoids technological lullabies. Inspired by the minimalist aesthetic of John Cage and intrigued by rock as a type of pop minimalism, Glass is one of several young American composers currently writing for amplified instruments. *North Star* consists of ten relatively brief pieces, originally composed for a film on sculptor Mark Di Suvero. Each piece is a kind of sound-monad, setting into motion a limited set of sonic elements, multiplied through over-dubbing, but always drawn from a pool of four performers: two singers, one keyboard player (Glass himself) and a horn player doubling on sax and flute.

Glass: Beyond aural wallpaper

The voices chant with a primitive gusto recalling Carl Orff, scat with a natural breathiness recalling Luciano Berio (who used the Swingle Singers in *Sinfonia*). Glass' own keyboard work is more redolent of rock prototypes: playing three different brands of electric organ as well as an Arp synthesizer, Glass at various points achieves calliope, harpsichord and "96 Tears" effects. Alternately soothing and demonic, the music itself is curiously compelling, as uncanny as a music box gone berserk. In their concise rigor, these ten pieces point the way beyond the aural wallpaper that so often passes for innovation in the new electric music.

★★★ **New Harvest . . . First Gathering,** *Dolly Parton* (RCA). In her first self-produced album, promised as

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a breakthrough, Dolly Parton proves four things: 1) that she is no "outlaw," not even a country neoclassicist à la Merle Haggard; 2) that in fact she has an almost fatal fondness for the "poppy," precious and corny; 3) that she conceives pop-rock-country music on a grand scale unheard since Charlie Rich's wonderful Smash sessions in the mid-sixties; 4) that Dolly Parton is, in truth, one of the very best vocalists we have.

★★★★ The Beach Boys Love You (Warner Bros.). The most striking thing about *Love You* is Brian Wilson's *music*. For the first time since 1968, Brian has composed, arranged and produced an entire Beach Boys album. His effortless command of melody and choral voicings is expected; but here he also draws, with assurance, on a peculiarly minimalist rock aesthetic, relying on simple vamps and strained lead vocals—a novel gesture that helps keep this record fresh, alive, vital.

Throughout side one, which is mostly up-tempo, the hard-edge instrumentation recalls the incidental music Brian wrote in 1972 for his "fairy tale" on *Holland*. That "tale" portrayed rock and roll as a modern form of magic transmitted publicly but exercised privately, in the music's ineffable power to elicit feelings unique to each listener. With the emphasis reversed, that is what this album is about as well. It is Brian's reaffirmation of rock as a public medium for sharing *his* most private pleasures, fears and fantasies.

That sounds corny: but as the title and lyrics attest, this is unabashedly a corny album. The Beach Boys sing about the marvels of observing the solar system, watching the Johnny Carson Show, picking up and bathing the baby—not unexceptional concerns for an astrology-minded, all-American dad, but hardly your average rock-band fare. There is a new car song, too, but it opens with the line, "Honkin' down the gosh-darn highway." Golly, Brian.

Such lyrical gaucheness has become a part of this band's special charm, however: and here it almost sounds calculated. As long as Brian Wilson can write a ravishing tune like "The Night Was So Young," the words scarcely matter anyway. After the strained and rather funereal high spirits of last year's "comeback," *15 Big Ones*, it's nice to hear Brian, and his Beach Boys, whole again.

★★★ The View from the Inside, *Bobby Hutcherson* (Blue Note). Accompanied by his working quartet, vibraphonist Hutcherson casts an effervescent spell on seven originals.

★★★ The Roots of My Raising, *Merle Haggard* (Capitol). A mixed bag of tracks from the inscrutable king of country music: some nifty delta blues and Western swing amidst the grab-your-hankie sentimentality.

★★★★ Hard Again, *Muddy Waters* (Columbia). I thought Muddy Waters stopped recording impassioned blues masterpieces 20 years ago, but producer Johnny Winter has proven me wrong, with the help of fellow sidemen James Cotton and "Pine Top" Perkins.

Movies

Mirror images

By Richard Corliss

Robert Altman is about the last filmmaker you'd want to set up a salon. At his best and worst, he's inimitable—which wouldn't stop ambitious acolytes from trying to imitate him, if only to flatter Altman into sponsoring their projects. So what's remarkable about the first two films to emerge from Altman's Lion's Gate Films—Robert Benton's recent *The Late Show* and now Alan Rudolph's **Welcome to L.A.**—is not how much the two films owe to Altman's work (surprisingly little) but how securely they stand on their own. Benton had, of course, written scripts and directed a film before Altman agreed to produce *The Late Show*. But Rudolph was known only as Altman's assistant director on three films and his screenwriter on *Buffalo Bill and the Indians;* their professional relationship is commonly defined as "mentor" and "protégé." And of the ten characters whose painfully promiscuous sex lives are examined in *Welcome to L.A.*, seven are played by performers who had appeared in earlier Altman films.

Despite all this, and despite what you've heard, *Welcome to L.A.* is not *Nashville West*. And, to the credit of both men, Rudolph is no Altman clone. *Nashville* and *Buffalo Bill* were mile-wide murals of social allegory; *Welcome to L.A.* is a microcosmic miniature, painted with a fine hand and a sharp eye for the way people's faces respond to broken dishes and promises. Altman plays his fondness for actors and his respect for improvisation against a tendency to moralize and pontificate. Rudolph is cool, calculating every word and image for their contribution to his film's structural equilibrium. He's like a man from outer space examining, with disinterested fascination, the creatures on this strange planet. Like the woman in an early Bob Dylan song, Rudolph "knows too much to argue or to judge." His camera prowls in and out and around the characters, peering at them. And every now and then, they peer back. *Welcome* has the tone of today—beyond idealism, even beyond cynicism—down perfect. It could be the *Blow-Up* of the seventies, a film people look back on as defining its decade.

Carradine and Kellerman: Beyond idealism, even beyond cynicism

If we were to look for a model for Rudolph's film, we'd find it in the plays of Arthur Schnitzler, whose comedies satirized and shocked *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. In *Anatol* (1892), Schnitzler created an archetype of the rootless, ruthless modern antihero, who glides from affair to affair without ever being touched. In *La Ronde* (1897) the playwright wove a tapestry of interlocking dalliances into a wry commentary on the power and impermanence of sexual passion among ten members of Vienna's upper, middle and lower classes who have nothing in common but the syphilis germ each lover passes on to the next. Rudolph's Anatol is Carroll Barber (Keith Carradine), a

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young pop-rock composer who returns from England to Los Angeles for the recording of his suite, "City of the One Night Stands," by pop star Eric Wood (Richard Baskin, who in fact composed the film's score). And his El Lay roundelay involves a handful of the city's hip bourgeoisie. In the few days before and after Christmas, most of the dancers change partners several times before returning to the status quo.

There's Carl Barber (Denver Pyle), Carroll's millionaire businessman father, who's been having an affair with Nona (Lauren Hutton), a photographer specializing in "corners—makes sense out of 'em, too," as Carl proudly notes. (Rudolph specializes in the corners people paint themselves into, and he too makes sense out of them.) There's Ken Hood (Harvey Keitel), Carl's righteous right-hand man, and his hyper-romantic wife Karen (Geraldine Chaplin). There's Ann Goode (Sally Kellerman), a realtor who rents Carroll his flat, and her husband Jack (John Considine), who rents him the flat's furnishings. There's Linda (Sissy Spacek), the Goodes' maid, whom Ann lends to Carroll, and who rents herself out to horny middle-aged men (Ken and Jack). And there's Susan Moore (Viveca Lindfors), Carroll's and Eric's agent, who brought the composer and the singer together—possibly with a few greased palms courtesy of Carroll's father, who wants his son back home to take over the business.

It's confusing enough assimilating the relationships at first glance. To explain all the "one night stands" that take place in *Welcome to L.A.*, you'd need a slide rule and Mr. Wizard. Suffice it to say that Jack, who's looking for kicks, has sex with Linda; that Ken, who's looking for intelligent compassion, has an assignation with Ann; and that Carroll, who's isn't looking for anything (but who looks *at* everything with Rudolph's ironic stare), allows himself to be chased by every woman in the film except Karen—whose self-destructive indifference piques first his curiosity, then his passion.

But for all the phone calls and couplings, for all the attempts to use sex the way other people use cocktail-party chatter—as a means of tunneling through a person's emotional DEW line—the characters in *Welcome* have their starkest confrontations with their mirrors, or with Rudolph's camera. Andrew Sarris has said that cinema is the art of "defining essences in terms of surfaces," and this is surely Rudolph's achievement here. But when Jack or Ann or Karen looks in the mirror and finds a subtly reproachful twin, the character seems at a loss to decide which side of the glass contains the real "me." Some of these folks have been playing a role for so long that they're not even pretending any more; they *are* their act. It's only in the moments when they face the camera in closeup that they make genuine human connection—with the viewer. That's when we can connect with the pain, or just the numbness, in those handsome, high-cheekboned faces with the wide, witty mouths. Did these women go to a finishing school to acquire those smiles that suggest both vulnerability and hidden reserves of patient strength? Did Carroll Barber go to England to acquire *his* smile, which understands everything and promises nothing? No: they went to L.A.

And no again: they went to any big city, and learned that you sell the only thing you've got—yourself—by seriously pretending you're not for sale. In the Kingdom of Cool, it's best not to be too eager to freshen your boss' drink (as Ken Hood does); he may be setting you up for a family plot. And it's best not to be so desperately romantic, to live your own remake of Garbo's *Camille* (like Karen Hood); a modern-day Armand Duval (Carroll) may sweep you away in his Ferrari. Expose yourself, the way Ken and Karen do, and you're in for a bondage more severe than anything in the theatrics of sadomasochism. It's called commitment, and it's dangerous. Commitment makes it hard to move on blithely to your next job, your next lover. But playing it cool means playing it safe; if you get hurt, you're the only one who knows. Or play it like Linda, the maid in the hay: she has a beatific, 1000-watt grin for everything from a pop star's song to the stoned love-talk of a middle-aged John. You smile; she grins; you both survive.

These are all by-the-way observations, as Rudolph allows the viewer to catch them. You needn't accept them to admire his film—and perhaps even enjoy it—for there are dozens of small epiphanies along the route, to be discovered at random, and with pleasure. Some of these moments become motifs that are repeated, with variations, throughout the film. There are bits of business (a plaintive cough) and lines of dialogue ("Don't answer that phone!") that the characters pass on, one to the next, like the V.D. in *La*

Ronde. Welcome to L.A. is full of these minute reverberations; they serve to connect and distinguish characters, and to offer the alert viewer more than a scenic tour of the urban libido.

I admire just about everything in the movie, especially Rudolph's calm assurance with both camera and actors; this most assuredly does *not* look like a first film. I like his funky, furtive sense of humor. I like the way he cuts away from a scene at the precise moment it's about to explode into domestic violence. I admire the moxie it took to make his debut film exactly his way. And I admire Altman for giving him a freedom one normally associates with established European directors. I also have a couple of quibbles: Neither Rudolph nor Harvey Keitel seems to have thought much about Ken's character. For most of the movie he's simply an uptight prick, and then he suddenly dissolves into hysterical sentiment. It's too easy to hate him at the beginning, and pity him at the end. And though Baskin's score—ambitious, jazz-influenced soft rock that suggests a marriage of Kenny Rankin and Blood, Sweat and Tears—boasts some haunting melodies, his lyrics are sullen and judgmental, hardly representative of the Carroll Barber we see in the film. But then, as Rudolph has said in an interview, Carroll is the one character who changes. "It's like going through a car wash: you come out the other end clean, or scratched; Carroll is both." At the end of the film, this composer of an anti-L.A. suite says, "I like L.A."

Still, audiences may find it difficult to respond to the laid-back but genuine feelings in *Welcome to L.A.* They may mistake its reticence for apathy, its dry humor for catatonia, its coolness for coldness, its surface slickness for an essential hollowness. It would be a shame if the film took years to find its true audience, in the manner of Richard Lester's 1968 masterpiece, *Petulia*—another sympathetic comedy of manners, which critics dismissed as a flip condemnation of the Haight-Ashbury generation. I'd advise you not to wait. Be the first in your neighborhood to see the cult movie of the 1980s. It'll make you feel hipper than even Keith Carradine.

In his new movie, **3 Women,** Robert Altman is also out and down in California—way out and way down in the Mojave Desert—to tell a weird story of two young women who mysteriously exchange identities. Alas, there's also been a switch in roles between Altman and Rudolph. In a comparison of their current films, the child is certainly father to the man. *Welcome to L.A.* is complex; *3 Women* is only complicated. *Welcome* involves its viewers in the paradoxes of recognizable personalities; *3 Women* challenges its viewers with the obscurities of an allegorical plot. Like Altman's *Images* (his only other original screenplay since he came to Hollywood), *3 Women* is a jigsaw-puzzle movie: you're supposed to spend most of your time wondering what's going on, and why. But *Images* was pretty to look at—the whites and greens of the Irish countryside reflecting the heroine's florid schizophrenia—and Susannah York made a fetching madwoman.

3 Women offers a more perverse reward: the spectacle of Shelley Duvall and Sissy Spacek, two of the movies' most artfully "natural" young actresses, struggling to turn Altman's mysterioso musings into a comedy of bad manners. For the first hour, they nearly succeed, while the director seems content to bury his plot points like land mines. But the expected explosion doesn't take place, because the

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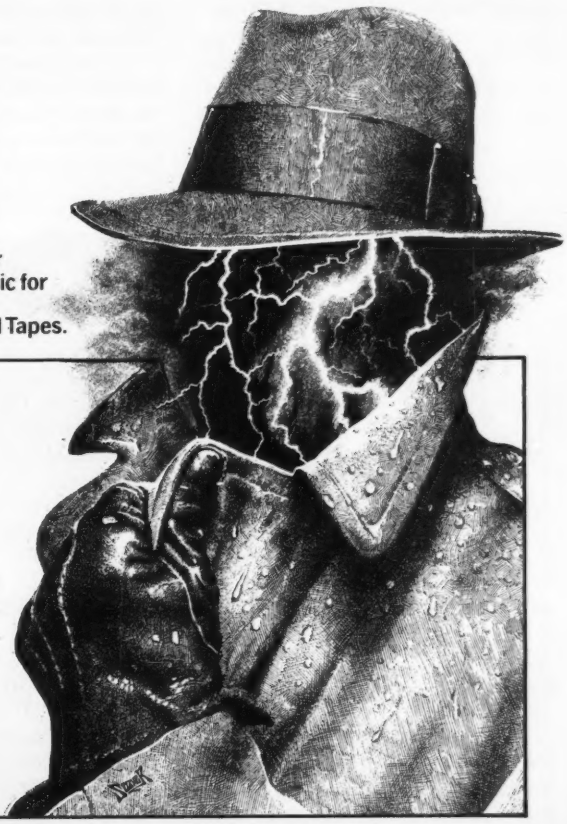

"Heavy Weather. You can dress for it, but you can't escape it.

"COLUMBIA," MARCAS REG. © 1977 CBS INC.

Spacek and Duvall: Toying with abstract geometry

movie turns pretentious in the worst way—managing to be both fulsome and arid—and you're left with the conclusion that Altman should give up profundity and go back to being a ringmaster in the carnival of American flakiness.

I'll leave it to some Ph.D. in Altmanology to parse the plot, which revolves around two young women acting out roles of much younger girls. Millie (Shelley Duvall) is a Little Miss Home Ec, the ideal reader of *Seventeen*, obsessed with boys, cooking, decorating, clothes and, most of all, herself—so full of herself she can't see that everyone sees through her, scorns or ignores her. But Pinky (Sissy Spacek) thinks Millie is "the most perfect person I ever met," because Pinky acts like a 10-year-old tomboy with a crush on her big sister. Clearly, Millie has too much personality, Pinky has almost none. But after a ferocious sibling fight, Pinky tries to kill herself—and emerges from a coma thinking she's Millie. Worse yet, Pinky is more successful at being Millie than Millie was; the young men who made fun of Shelley-Millie pay court to the new, improved Sissy-Millie. It takes a terrible nightmare for the "real" Pinky to resurface one last time—until, at the end, they both go under, and take with them an older woman (a muralist, who's married to the one man both Millie and Pinky had sex with).

This is a movie about identity, sexuality and the power of the will. So the three recurring visual motifs are mirrors (superego), a mural depicting three women and a tiny satyr (id) and a water line that rises from the bottom of the film frame as the characters sink into subconsciousness (ego). We're meant to see consciousness as the sea level below which much of the film takes place: in the pool of a spa for elderly arthritics; in a drained pool in which the third woman (Janice Rule) mutely paints a mural; in the motel pool—with yet another bizarre mural on the bottom—into which Pinky suicidally dives. Having failed to become a part of Millie's "artwork" (herself), she throws herself into a new fiction (the mural). And by the end of the film, all three women have become figures in the mural—but in different roles.

3 Women is positively clangorous with symbols, but the one I find most pertinent was probably not intended. The film climaxes with a highly wrought birth scene: the baby bursts forth from the womb; it is dead. Not surprising, since it has no umbilical cord! And, for me, *3 Women* lacks that life-sustaining connection to psychological reality; there's no realistic springboard from which the story could make a graceful dive into fantasy. As it happens, nine months elapsed between Altman's conceiving of the film (in a dream) and its deliverance-release; but the movie is stillborn, a notebook of ideas that couldn't be translated into emotions. It's one reason I prefer the "protégé's" film to the "mentor's." Altman is toying with abstract geometry; Rudolph is confronting the human equation—which, in this case, adds up to quite a bit more.

Books

Roof don't leak when there ain't no rain . . .

By Geoffrey Wolff

Truck: On Rebuilding a Worn-out Pickup, and other Post-Technological Adventures.
By John Jerome, with drawings by the author. Houghton Mifflin (145 pp., $6.95).

John Jerome and his wife Chris live in northern New Hampshire, where they make their way on low overhead and timely ambushes on New York money by way of freelance editing and writing. Jerome has written a great deal about skiing, and written well, but pricey downhill equipment and resort life are inimical to his appetites. He is a cross-country man, out for the long haul. In his 40s, he lives a pared-down life, hunts for the irreducible bits at the bottom of most things and most motives. He values plain talk, reason and classical proprieties.

All this I know about him by way of his account of his association with a blue Dodge pickup, built in 1950, the year he left high school in Texas. This truck, which he first thought about because "hauling horseshit for the garden one barrelful at a time" is a lousy way to put in hours, cost $200. It cost another $800 to rewire it, replace broken parts, and have the engine rebuilt. It also cost Jerome more than a year of labor, and much stone misery. It now runs pretty well, and is in fair shape. Maybe it's worth $1,000, probably less, but this is not the kind of value to be fixed upon it, or upon Jerome's enterprise.

The project of rebuilding it piece by piece made no more sense than a book about the project would seem to make. But like Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Truck* is an inquiry into values, into the nature of processes. As Jerome moves through the rebuilding of his Dodge, he makes the ambition explicit: "Understand it all. Know thy gadgets: first step

in restoring some kind of wholeness to one's life." Like Pirsig, Jerome sees technology whole, and identifies the paradox implicit in antitechnology. Pirsig's comrade John despised and feared machinery, yet despised discomfort even more, depending utterly upon technology's provisions; Jerome, too, isolates the "gross contradiction" in hippy ethics. He reflects upon his hip friends' insistence on an organic and vegetarian diet even as they will try any chemical that alters their perception. For them, a barn raising is taken to be "a religious ceremony when in fact it is a technological exercise."

Too much can be made of this. Jerome is much quicker to laugh at himself than Pirsig, and is much less preoccupied by grand dichotemies and Hegelian dialectics. He repudiates himself whenever he catches himself indulging in "bogus philosophizing," and is in his most natural voice when he interrupts a discussion of the painstaking cleaning of old parts: "No point in making an epic of this: it was pleasant enough work. . . ."

TRUCK
ON REBUILDING A WORN-OUT PICKUP, AND OTHER POST-TECHNOLOGICAL ADVENTURES
by John Jerome

Pirsig was looking for the metaphorical system of systems overriding the system of systems that is technology. Jerome sticks closer to home, abjuring ruminations about Platonic and Aristotelian ratiocination. His truck is called the *Harry S Truman*, not *Phaedrus*, and the jigsaw he takes apart and re-forms is of one truck's and one man's nature, rather than of Eastern and Western world views. In keeping with the wonderful clarity and informational ease of his line drawings of truck parts, Jerome's descriptions of the workings of moving innards, their connections and frequent dumbness, are lucid and more: they make of the truck a character whose fate—life or death?—matters.

Here is a carburetor: "Understand it? It is only an old-fashioned Flit gun, a perfume atomizer, hyperundersimplified by technological progress into a seat of mystery." False technological mystery offends Jerome, who nonetheless can sympathize with the kind of mystification that causes a driver to open the hood of a balky car, "expecting to see . . . what? Blood? Broken bones?" He himself never decoded the ciphers of the electrical system of his truck, and arranging for the proper opening and closing of the valves of this flat-six engine gave him the kind of headache that metaphysics gave Phaedrus. He never achieves his "Platonic Ideal of truckness," a perfect and trouble-free gadget, perfect because every bit of it has been rationalized and rebuilt by its user. "I thought a truck was something that either works or needs fixing. Wrong. A truck works and needs fixing."

So with Jerome's New Hampshire life. *Truck* is arranged around seasonal flux, and the weather outside the barn in which Jerome labors by the nervous and uncertain heat of his wood stove suggests the nature of a machine in use as opposed to a machine in theory. A combination of predictabilities (the leaves will change color the same time every year, despite the temperature; the valve timing must be right—there is only a single *right*—or the engine will not run) and uncertainties (a January thaw and a seized piston) imposes its weight upon Jerome. He learns to bend rather than break, to ride the wave: "Roof don't leak when there ain't no rain," as the wisdom goes.

It is sometimes unsettling to hear him indulge the locutions of an abstract culture: *trip, head, I can dig it, really get off on that.* Not because he is hostile to hip culture (he is not), but because he is otherwise hostile to all things imprecise and unparticular. But finally this book works because its writer works. He knows his dimensions, writes sociably and clearly, tries to get to the heart of matters. He, like his truck, is of the long-stroke, high-torque generation, rather than the high-compression, jumpy, hectic short-stroke generation of what they called supercars. He gets from here to there purposefully, and maintains himself.

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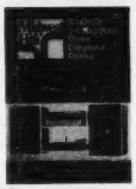

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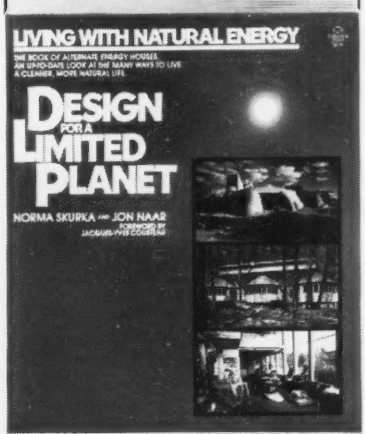

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Final Tribute

Down at the heels/By Arthur Lubow

The legendary discovery of the Earth shoe is almost as inspiring as the Biblical creation of its namesake.

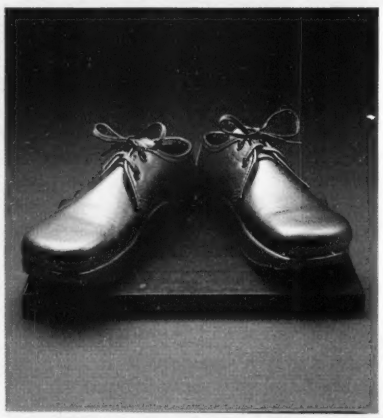
Twenty years ago, near the city of Santos in Brazil, a Danish yoga enthusiast named Anne Kalso found that by flexing her feet forward as she walked, she straightened her posture and eased her breathing. A stroll on the beach confirmed her hunch. Examining the footprints left in the sand by the Brazilian Indians, she observed that the heel dug a deeper impression than the toe. Was this the secret of the Indians' marvelously erect posture? Like Newton's apple and Fleming's mold, Kalso's footprints marked the opening of a new path of scientific exploration.

Flash forward 12 years to Copenhagen. Raymond and Eleanor Jacobs, a New York couple just entering middle age, are traveling through Europe on an extended vacation. They are trying to decide what to do with their lives. Ray has worked first in his father's fur business, then as a photographer. Ellie has been laboring at an ad agency. Both are searching for new directions. But first they are looking for a solution to a more nagging problem. Ellie's back and feet ache; if the pain doesn't stop, she may have to cut short the trip. Across the continent she has hunted for a pair of comfortable shoes, and in Copenhagen the trail leads to a small shop run by an innovative woman. The woman, of course, is Anne Kalso, who has designed her own footwear based on the concept of a "negative heel." Ellie buys a pair of shoes. Her foot problems vanish. She soon realizes that this store may provide her with more than a remedy for aching arches.

And so Ray and Ellie Jacobs return to the store, this time not as consumers but as budding capitalists. Anne Kalso is at first unenthusiastic about the idea of exporting her shoes to America. She has been approached before. She has always declined. She asks whether the Jacobses are in the shoe business; when they say no, she is a bit more receptive. She requests Ray's birthday and consults astrological charts. The signs are favorable. An arrangement is worked out, and the Jacobses return to America with the Kalso patent.

Looking back now, it's clear that the signs could not have been more favorable. When the Jacobses established their first store in Manhattan in 1970, they were jumping early on a long-riding wave. Decorated with natural woods and hanging plants, their shop was perfect. Packing their shoes in burlap bags instead of boxes was an ingenious stroke. Even more brilliant was the name they chose for their product. It was April 1970, the fiery dawn of the environmental movement. Opening their store on Earth Day, they presented the Earth shoe. It was a natural.

The Earth shoe was a (slightly rolling) giant step forward for mankind. Looking at it, you first noticed the exceptionally broad toe. Putting it on, you were immediately struck by two odder features. The "negative heel" placed the back of your foot lower than the front. And a lift under the ball of the foot gave a rolling bounce to your walk. The newly shod acolyte might well feel uncomfortable. The manufacturers



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES JOERN

suggested a two-week break-in period of gradual wear to allow the calf muscles to adjust to new strains. Once the shoes were broken in, though, enthusiastic converts reported improvements in posture, alleviation of foot and back aches and gusts of new energy.

To explain the popularity of Earth shoes, though, you must transcend mundane talk of calf muscles. The shoe became a statement. It was a bumper sticker for the feet. To the history buff, this phenomenon was familiar. In the Middle Ages, for instance, dandies wore shoes that extended a foot beyond the end of their toes. If you met such a fop on the street, you immediately got the message: here was someone so rich he barely needed to walk, let alone work. In the early seventies, if you encountered someone Earth-shod, you could ask him what he thought of Transcendental Meditation and be confident that he would at least know what you were talking about.

There were enough of these people to make the Earth shoe a healthy success. The company grew organically, as satisfied customers asked permission to open stores of their own. After an enthusiastic endorsement by Orson Bean on *The Tonight Show* and a flurry of articles in newspapers and news magazines, sales soared. They eventually reached $14 million a year. Lines formed outside Earth shoe stores, and some customers had to wait a year before their orders could be filled.

Inevitably, competitors appeared. There were 100 knock-offs of the Kalso original.

The cheaper knock-offs looked like Earth shoes, but their backward slope was far milder and they lacked a metatarsal support. So there was no initiation period for converts. As antistyle became stylish, a diluted strain of the Kalso culture was assimilated by society. But society didn't want everything. The spirit of the company—typified by the free Transcendental Meditation course offered to all six-month employees—was forgotten. Indeed, the spirit of the company began to be forgotten at Kalso Systemet itself.

Hoping to keep up with the times, the company introduced a series of new styles. Most of them fell flat. An expensive national television campaign didn't pay off. Distribution became disorganized: back-to-school shoes that stores ordered in July didn't arrive until November. In an effort to recoup some losses, the company decided late last year to start selling Earth shoes outside the 130 exclusive outlets. For many shop owners, who had viewed Kalso Systemet as a family more than a company, this decision ended the romance. Business was business after all.

Small, it had been beautiful; big, it went bust. Kalso Systemet recently declared bankruptcy. Undergoing reorganization, the company (and the shoe) may survive. But the big manufacturers are moving out of the "negative heel" market, and the Earth shoe has been transformed from a cult symbol to a boutique item. Sad somehow that its most enduring impact on American society will be a fashion footnote—the rounded toe. ●

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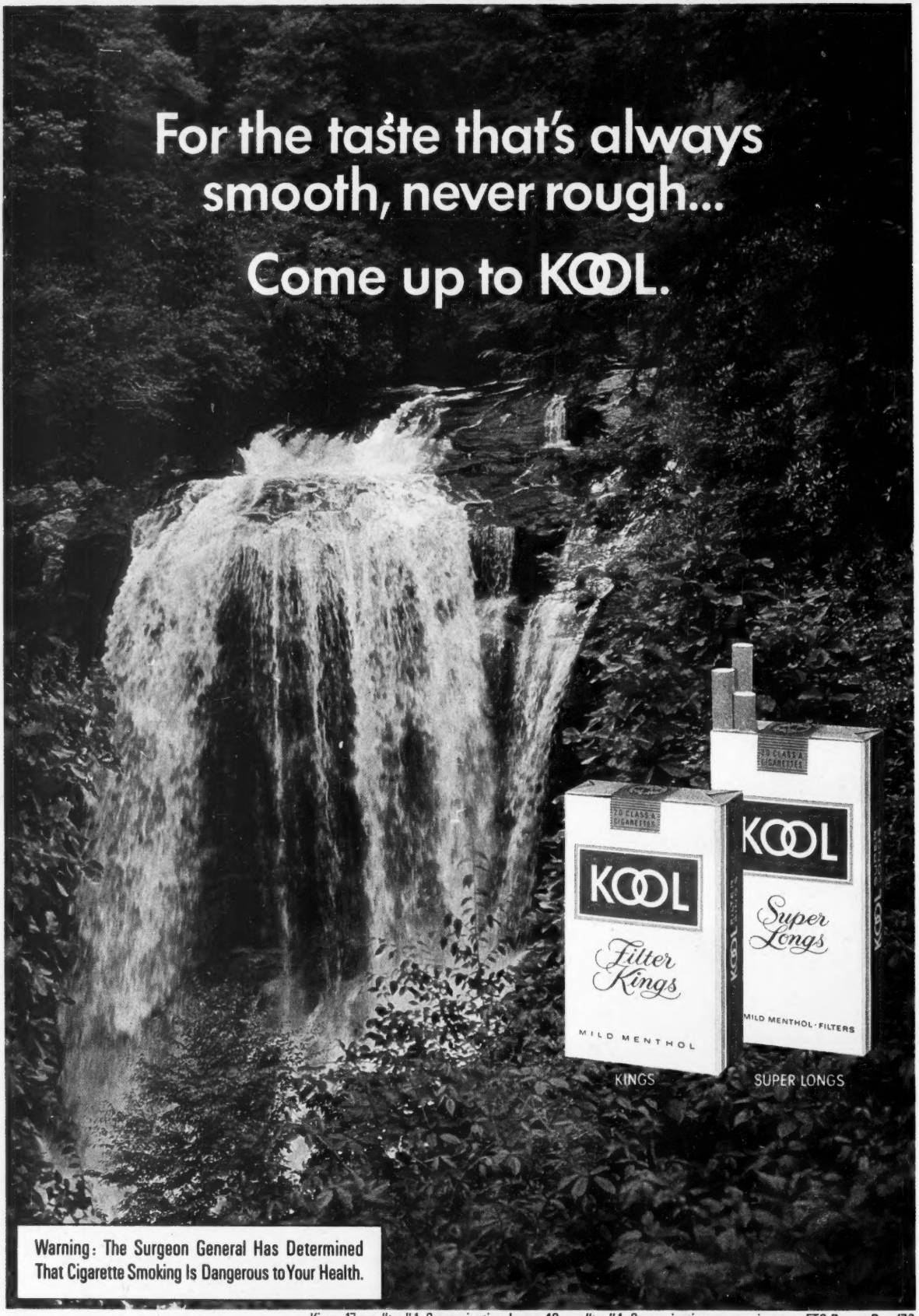

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Kings, 17 mg. "tar," 1.3 mg. nicotine; Longs, 18 mg. "tar," 1.3 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, FTC Report Dec. '76